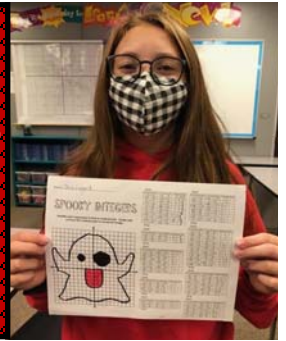


NEILLSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Communicator

November 2020



## Career and Life Ready in the FACS Classroom

Happy fall from the Family and Consumer Science Department! We have been busy getting ready to be career and life ready here at school in our FACS classroom. Here are just a few items we have been working on: job applications and career investigations in Work Habits class; table manners and knife skills in Foods 1 class; and taking care of an infant and the cost of an infant in Parents and Children class. Health Careers has been busy with career investigation, as well as having several guest speakers join us virtually from local hospitals and clinics to discuss career paths and options for our students. Our FACS8 class just started with basic cooking skills and WOW can this group eat!

I can't forget about our FCCLA Club. They have been busy making fleece blankets for individuals at the Care and Rehab Center located in Neillsville. Thanks to all the students and parents who allowed their children to volunteer their time to help others in our community.



## Students Selected for All-Conference Band

Congratulations to (from left) Liz Jorgensen, Nevaeh Shipman, Dayne Loberg, Jacob Kopp and Brian Guizar-Ortiz for being nominated and selected for this year's All-Conference Band. The event is scheduled to occur on Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Students spend the day rehearsing with area band students and perform an evening concert.



## Calendar

Please monitor school communications  
for information on activities and  
holiday breaks, as dates may change.

## Superintendent's Message



**A Very Different World:** The coronavirus pandemic has certainly created a very different world than what we are used to living in, and until we can get the spread of the virus under control the world will remain very different. The virus has certainly changed the way

that schools are being forced to deliver education to our children. Even though everyone wants their children to be back in school as we have in the past, we must stay vigilant about doing all that we can to keep our children, families, staff and communities safe while still providing educational opportunities for our students. Please know that we greatly appreciate all of the sacrifices and extra efforts everyone has made, and continue to make, to help our children continue to learn, remain safe, and to be resilient while faced with this pandemic.

**Monthly Operational Plans:** Each month the Neillsville Board of Education will be approving an operational plan for the following month until school is back to normal. Please watch for any updates regarding the monthly operational plans. These plans are developed to keep everyone safe, provide educational opportunities for our

students, and keep everyone fully informed.

**COVID-19 Dashboard:** The district has provided a COVID-19 dashboard that is posted on the district website to provide updated information about the number of active and cumulative positive coronavirus cases in each building. The district website can be found at [www.neillsville.k12.wi.us](http://www.neillsville.k12.wi.us).

**Tax Information:** The Neillsville Board of Education passed a tax levy that decreases the tax levy rate by 3.2%, and reduces the monetary levy by 1.7%. The decrease is a result of an increased amount of state aid to our district. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and families that have moved out of the district, the student enrollment in Neillsville has decreased significantly. This decrease in enrollment will have a very negative impact on funding for our district moving forward. The Board of Education and the Neillsville community will have to be very strategic about ways to continue to fund our schools in order to provide the highest level of education for our children as possible.

Thanks for Your Support!

John Gaier

Superintendent

## Fourth Graders Recognize Red Ribbon Week

The first quarter of the year was exciting and educational for the fourth grade students and teachers. The students continue to expand their reading knowledge using the reading program *Wonders*, and continue to expand their math knowledge using the math *Expressions* program. They have been using both programs since kindergarten. The students are also studying Wisconsin history by learning about the early Native American traditions.

Although we didn't formally celebrate homecoming, we showed our school spirit by wearing red and white. At the end of October, the students participated in different dress-up days that helped make them aware of the dangers of drugs as part of Red Ribbon Week.



## High School Principal's Message



Dear High School Families:

I hope this finds you all doing well during these very difficult times. The majority of this message was sent out to high school families via the Infinite Campus Messenger on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The purpose of this communication is two-fold:

1. Clarify the expectation for students on their "remote" days. Most of our students, approximately 89%, are attending school in-person under our A/B Cohort groups where they attend in-person two days a week and are remote the other three. On the remote days, students are expected to be doing anywhere from 2-4 hours of school work depending upon their grade level in high school and the rigor of their course schedule. These remote days are not days "off". We understand many students are working jobs or doing other things on these days that are not school related, but we are seeing students returning to school having done no school work on their remote days; this needs to change and we are asking for your help outside of school to keep our students progressing forward with their work. Our school week is five days a week, not two.

2. So far we have been fortunate not to have to close the high school and we hope that continues. However, in the event that we do need to close the building for any length of time at all we will operate under the following plan:

- We would plan on high school teachers reporting to school and working directly from their classrooms.
- We would be following our regular bell schedule.
- Students would be expected to be in class remotely for their regular classes via their Chromebook; they would be asked to join a virtual classroom from their teacher.
- If a student is not able to join their class for some reason they will be expected to view the classroom lesson and complete any work on their own time.
- Courses may not meet for the full period, but every course would be held at its scheduled time where direct instruction would be provided and students would be informed of the work given and need for completion prior to the next class meeting.
- Fridays would still be a fully remote day for all students; staff would continue to use these days to reach out to students remotely and assist them with any questions.
- I can tell you that I have personally provided this information to all high school students and staff over the past several weeks in updates that I have provided to them. There is no reason for any student not to know of this plan.

In closing, we feel fortunate to have our students back! I can say that everybody I know wants our kids back in the building every day just as soon as we can do that in a safe and responsible manner. Until then please know that our staff continues to work tirelessly to help every student. We appreciate your help and support as we all try to navigate these difficult times together for each and every student. Please reach out to us at school with any questions.

Please stay safe and stay well!

Respectfully,

Mr. Anderson

High School Principal



## Middle School Principal's Message



Three words that come to my mind as I reflect on the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year are flexibility, communication, and collaboration. In a time where the face of education looks unlike any other in my 27 years as a public educator, I have never witnessed a year where students, families, and faculty have demonstrated these characteristics in greater depth. Thank you all for that! I believe in the midst of this pandemic, that these characteristics may be silver linings that will endure for years to come. I also wanted to extend my gratitude to students, families, and staff for continuing to take precautions to keep all as safe as possible. Thank you parents and guardians for screening your student each morning and communicating with school when your child needs to stay home. Here at school, we are wearing masks, cleaning workspaces at the end of each class period, sanitizing hands on the way in and out of the classrooms, and social distancing as much as possible to name a few.

Students are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to help them stay hydrated throughout the day. Moreover, I want to take this opportunity to share a few virtual learning tips to help at-home learning days run smoother. These tips apply whether students are remote only one day per week, or 100% remote. First, on days where at-home learning is taking place, try to maintain a consistent schedule that works for your family. Additionally, it is beneficial to designate a space in your home where your student can complete their schoolwork. Furthermore, talk to your student about what they have learned and ask what they still need to complete. Help your student with organizational skills, as well as remind them to check their school email and Google Classroom on a daily basis to see if there are any time-sensitive messages from their teachers. Finally, have patience with your student as virtual learning takes time to adjust to and does not come easily to every student.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate what a wonderful job and how proud I am of students, families, and faculty for all they are doing during this unprecedented time. Hoping each of you finds a silver lining that can arise from interesting times.

Have a wonderful day,  
Kory Poeschel  
Middle School Principal

## The Competition is On!

### High Quiz Bowl

The High Quiz Bowl team is still competing this year! High Quiz Bowl is an academic trivia game played between schools in our area. Since this is done through the Polycom video conferencing system, it works very well during pandemic times. The students don't have to travel anywhere and they are able to maintain distancing and mask wearing during matches. Our current team members are Dayne Loberg, Kara Oldham, and Mackenzie Keller.

## Elementary Principal's Message



Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! I'm so glad we started the school year in person during these difficult times. Along with the Covid-19 precautionary adjustments to the start of our school year, we have made other changes as well. These changes range from new staff, reading instruction, remote learning, and screening assessments to new school photographers. It is safe to say that we have been extremely busy!

### New Staff

This new school year brings new staff to the Neillsville Elementary School. Miss Krista Rueth is our new 1st grade teacher! Miss Rueth is a former student of the School District of Neillsville. She attended college at the University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse; and this is her first year teaching. Miss Rueth joins the following 1st grade team of teachers: Mrs. Jenny Robida, Miss Jenny Lindner, and Ms. JoAnn Hauge. She brings new ideas and insight into our already fabulous 1st grade team!

Mrs. Kayla Harder is our new 2nd grade teacher in the Neillsville Elementary School. She joins the following 2nd grade team of teachers: Mrs. Brenda Bredlau, Miss Amy Kosmosky, and Mrs. Kathy Luchterhand. Mrs. Harder comes to us from the Loyal School District. She taught many elementary grade levels at Loyal. Therefore, she comes to us with a wealth of knowledge of different curriculums from a range of grade levels. Her experience gives our super second grade team an amazing amount of knowledge of student instructional strategies to use at different grade levels.

Mrs. Becca Bernhagen is our new 5-year-old kindergarten teacher. She joins the following 5-year-old kindergarten team of teachers: Mrs. Jessica Scheider, Mrs. Michelle Bergemann, and Miss Shannon LaDow. Mrs. Bernhagen first came to the School District of Neillsville family as a substitute teacher. Therefore, she has gotten to be in all areas of the school district! Her soft spoken and caring approach in instructing students makes these young students comfortable with leaving their parents to come to school all day. We are so happy that she is a permanent member of the fantastic 5-year-old kindergarten teachers!

Mrs. Beth Ruzic is our new teaching assistant in the special education department. She joins Miss Kirsty Fahey. Mrs. Ruzic has had many years of experience teaching children in daycare settings. She brings a calm demeanor and a caring attitude to our special education department. We are so happy to have her be a part of our Neillsville Elementary School family!

Mrs. Patti Drangstveit is a new teaching assistant in the special education department. She joins Miss Danielle Graham. Mrs. Drangstveit is a lifelong Neillsville resident that has worked in a number of settings. Her cheerful and loving attitude makes positive impacts on our students and staff. We are lucky to have Mrs. Drangstveit!

### Reading Instruction and New Assessment

We are in the process of making our reading instruction even better. Neillsville Elementary School is teaming up with a company called Schools Cubed. This company is a reading consulting company that assists rural school districts in how we teach students to read. At this time, we are studying the Science of

*continued on the next page . . .*

## Elementary Principal *continued* . . .

Reading. The Science of Reading consists of research that is proven to strengthen reading instruction. Our teachers focus on the 5 areas of reading: Phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Instruction is systematic, cumulative, and sequential. Research has shown that students need repetition in order to learn new material. Gifted learners need 1 to 4 repetitions; typical learners need 4 to 14 repetitions; struggling learners need 14 to 40 repetitions; and learners with a disability need 40 to 200 repetitions. Therefore, it is important that students have the time in and outside of school to practice their reading skills. Schools Cubed is guiding us in adjusting our lessons in our current reading program and reading interventions. We are also in the process of selecting more books and teaching materials for our students and teachers. We are making decisions based on research and evidence. I'm very excited about the direction we are going!

The School District of Neillsville also switched our district screener (assessment). We now will be taking FastBridge Learning Assessments in reading and math. This screener will be taken by students 3 times per year. It assesses skill growth in reading and math, not just a grade level performance. Therefore, FastBridge gives specific information on skills students have and need in reading and math. We can better plan instruction, intervention, and enrichment when using this screener.

### Remote Learning

Since we have started the school year, we have added and subtracted students that are considered remote learners. Covid-19 has impacted some families' decisions on how their child(ren) will obtain their education. Remote learners are not at the school in person, but are getting instruction and completing assignments at home. Along with student learning, our goal is to make connections with these students. We want them to know that they are a part of our school community. Four-year-old kindergarten through 2nd grade students use SeeSaw as their remote learning platform. These students also get paper pencil tasks sent home to them. Third through 5th grade students have Chromebooks. Therefore, their remote learning platform is Google Classroom. I encourage our students, families and teachers to make connections with each other to ensure learning takes place while students are participating in remote learning.

### In Closing

I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support of our school. We have gone through many challenges since last March. It's amazing to me how well our students are coping with this difficult situation. Our number one priority is to make sure everyone is safe while getting the best quality education possible. I appreciate your trust in us!

Mrs. Marcy Kunze  
Elementary School Principal

## find us on social media



@NeillsvilleWarriors



@NeillsvilleSD



neillsvillewarriors

# Neillsville FFA Alumni



## Drive-Thru Pancake Breakfast

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**Sunday, November 15**  
**8:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

Or until we run out of food

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**Neillsville High Football Food Stand**



**Buttermilk & Blueberry  
Pancakes**  
**Sausage Patty**  
**Cheese Curds**



**FREE WILL  
DONATION**



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**Please enter from the west side of  
the high school, and exit towards  
Schuster Park**

## High School Guidance



**Hello!** I hope you are all doing well despite all that's going on in the world around us. When I ask students how they're doing this fall, I hear a range of answers; some are doing great and some are really struggling and missing the routine we all had prior to March. If you find yourself struggling or want to help encourage someone you know who is struggling, please take a moment to read these 13 mental health tips to see if there might be small slight changes you can make to help lift your spirits. As always, I encourage you to **reach out** to myself, a good friend, trusted teacher or anyone here at school you find approachable. Sometimes, something as simple as a good talk to get it all off your chest can really make a difference! :)

Here are a few tips for mental health and coping from Teen Mental Health First Aid <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>:

1. Maintain a daily routine with consistent sleep, activity, and study patterns.
2. Stay connected with others, and try to find moments of humor.
3. Talk to people you feel comfortable with about your feelings or worries, then give yourself permission to stop worrying.
4. Eat breakfast every morning, plus snacks and meals at regular times throughout the day.
5. Limit coffee or energy drinks, as these will increase feelings of anxiety and make it difficult to relax.
6. Look for patterns or be aware of situations that make you feel particularly worried or anxious. When you're in these situations, try relaxation or distraction techniques or ask a family member or friend to help.
7. Relieve times of high anxiety with physical activity; engage in regular aerobic exercise (e.g., walk, jog, yoga, dance).
8. Limit the amount of time you spend talking about or watching/listening to news media or social media if you are finding information about the COVID-19 situation overwhelming or distressing.
9. Do hobbies or activities that you enjoy, calm you down, or focus your mind and body. These could be arts and crafts, physical activity, listening to music, reading, journaling, watching TV or movies, or chatting with friends by phone, videoconference or text.
10. Understand that the people around you are probably also finding this situation stressful, and they might also be having difficulty controlling their emotions. Try to resolve conflict.
11. If you continue to feel overwhelmed, out of control, or unable to calm down after a period of weeks, seek help from a mental health professional.
12. Take time for yourself.
13. Be kind to yourself and each other. We'll work through this together.

### Important Reminders for Seniors:

- All seniors should have had their Senior Individual Planning Conference already. Hopefully, at some point, your advisors will be able to continue on with these discussions to help you stay on track with your plans over the course of the year.
- Please continue to check your **YELLOW SENIOR CHECKLIST** to stay on track.
- *Applications to Colleges and Tech Schools should be completed soon if not already done; Halloween = Ahead of the Game, Thanksgiving = On Time, and Christmas = Slightly Behind.* Remember, the earlier you are accepted, the sooner you can apply for scholarships from your university/college.

*continued on the next page . . .*



## High School Guidance *continued* . . .

- Please remember to **continually check your SCHOOL GMAIL ACCOUNT** for important announcements, specifically scholarship updates. *Please note, our local scholarship program will open in January. Scholarship help sessions will be held at that time.*
- The FAFSA application opened on Oct. 1. I sent out a letter with information about the FAFSA as well as virtual help sessions to those of you that indicated you planned to continue your education in some regard. If you need assistance in completing the FAFSA, please contact me anytime and I will be happy to help.

### Important Reminders for Juniors:

- **Junior Individual Planning Conferences** are scheduled for October and November; you should have received a letter in the mail with your scheduled date and time. Please contact Mrs. Backaus if you need to reschedule for a different time.
- **ACT Reminder:** In accordance with the Wisconsin state testing procedures, all juniors will take the ACT plus writing **on Tuesday, March 9, 2021**. The ACT can be used for college admission just like any other scheduled ACT; more information will be provided during your junior planning conference and as the test date gets closer.
- **ACT Preparation-At School:** Given the unusual year we are having, ACT prep at school has yet to be determined. At this point, students who want to study for the test are encouraged to prep on their own. See information in the next bullet below.
- **ACT Preparation-On Your Own:** It is not too early to start practicing for the ACT. FREE ONLINE PREPARATION is available through **March2Success**. All juniors have been informed about this site and those that want to have been registered. Although there are several free test prep sites, this site in particular offers 7 full length ACT tests with great individual question/response feedback.
- **Unsure about your plans for after HS?:** It is quite common for juniors to still be undecided as to what career path they specifically want to follow. During junior meetings, I have been encouraging students to revisit their **Xello accounts** where they can take interest inventories which match them with career fields that seem most appropriate based on their answers. Other experiences that can help in narrowing down a direction are **job shadows, campus tours and taking career based high school and college classes**. Please let me know if I can help you with any of these opportunities.

### Important Reminders for Freshmen & Sophomores:

- **CLASSROOM LESSONS:** Mrs. Backaus (or a scheduled guest presenter) will be presenting in your English or Social Studies classes *hopefully* every month. (Class time is precious this year with our current schedule.) This is a great time for us to connect about your academic, career, and personal/social growth! I look forward to these days each month and hope you do as well!
- **GET INVOLVED:** As hard as it is right now to get involved in extracurricular activities, do your best to find things (even small, simple things) that can be done even now. Remember, keeping track of your experiences on your "Student Involvement Profile" (chart located in your ACP Google Drive Folder) starting from freshman year on is the best way to be prepared for college and scholarship applications you may fill out your senior year.
- **SETTING A STRONG GPA EARLY:** Just a friendly reminder, setting a strong GPA early in high school is very important. Remember, semester grades are the ones that go on your transcript; finish this second part of semester one strong! For information on how you can graduate with honors, please check out the Laude Chart on page 17 in the 2020-21 HS Student-Parent Handbook.

Warm wishes for a happy and healthy Thanksgiving and Christmas season!

Mrs. Backaus

## Elementary Guidance



### Classroom Lessons

Guidance lessons look a little different this year than in the past. Students in kindergarten, first, and second grade get to see me every week for 50 minutes, as I am a part of their AMP rotation. Pre-school, third, fourth and fifth grades see me every other week for 30 minutes.

Here at Neillsville Elementary we are using a program called Second Step for our Guidance lessons. Second Step is a Social Emotional Learning curriculum that many other districts in our area utilize. Second Step covers four different units:

Skills for Learning: Students gain skills to help themselves learn, including how to focus their attention, listen carefully, use self-talk to stay on task, and be assertive when asking for help with schoolwork.

Empathy: Students learn to identify and understand their own and others' feelings. Students also learn how to take another's perspective and how to show compassion.

Emotion Management: Students learn specific skills for calming down when experiencing strong feelings, such as anxiety or anger.

Problem Solving: Students learn a process for solving problems with others in a positive way.

We also use Second Step's Bully Prevention Curriculum and Child Protection Curriculum.

So far this year, students have learned about all of the skills for learning and we have just started our empathy unit.

### Mindfulness

Students in our lower grades have also spent some time learning about mindfulness. Mindfulness is all about being present in the moment. So we practice focusing on one thing at a time, like our breath. When we lose focus or start thinking about other things (like what is for lunch?) we say that is okay and refocus on our breath. Mindfulness takes lots of practice! So we encourage them to keep practicing! If you would like to learn more about mindfulness or help your child practice, check out [mindyeti.com](http://mindyeti.com) or type Mind Yeti into [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) to find their channel.

### Questions and Concerns

If you ever have any questions about the guidance program please feel free to contact me. Also, if you are interested in getting your son or daughter in a small group or individual counseling with me please reach out.

Thank you and have a great rest of your year,

Bri Anne Collins

Elementary School Counselor

[bacollins@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:bacollins@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

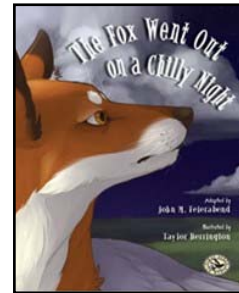
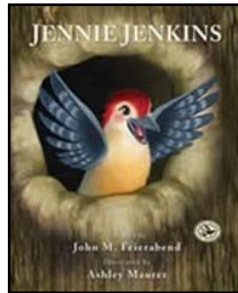
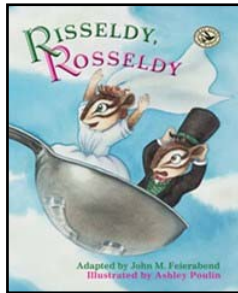
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Wow! What a start to the year! Music has had some ups and downs at the start of the year but we are still making music over here at Neillsville Elementary. Here is an overview of what we are doing in music!

**4k-2 Grade-** We are continuing our path to music mastery in the elements of being Tuneful, Beatful, and Artful by doing our music activities in a somewhat modified and safe way. Also it's a lot of fun! Some activities include playing rhythm instruments, doing actions with recorded music, and playing circle games. Every other class we

usually end with a Songtale. These are story songs which tell some sort of tale. Most have books that go along with the song. Examples are pictured below.



**3-5 Grade-** One fun and interesting activity we have started doing more in music this year is playing instruments like Boomwhackers, Xylophones, and Metallophones. We hope to continue playing these instruments and become proficient enough to play for a performance. It takes lots of practice, but we know it will be awesome when we are done. We are also striving toward reading music notation so we cannot only read other's musical pieces, but create our own and write them down so others can enjoy them!



As with all classes here at school, some activities we are creatively trying to enjoy while remaining safe for all involved. This brings us to our celebrated concerts. **While we will not be able to have a Winter Concert this year as normal, I plan to do something festive with the students and give our community a virtual performance of some kind in time to celebrate in your homes.** I have not worked out all the details yet so please watch for more information to come!!

Musically, Mr. The!!!

## Fifth Graders Study the Skeletal System

Math started out the year with adding and subtracting fractions, and we have just completed adding and subtracting decimals. In social studies we studied the first Americans and made our own version of painted buffalo hides. In health we learned about the skeleton and lined our halls with dancing skeletons for Halloween. We have been adjusting well to having our masks on. We enjoy taking our work outside for a mask break!



## News From Lunch Lady Land



### FREE MEALS CONTINUE

This spring when school closure was mandated, the federal government immediately provided a waiver so all families with children between the ages of 0-18 could receive 2 free meals/day. **NOTE: All children between 0-18 may receive these meals Monday – Friday, not just enrolled students.** The school board and the administration made the decision to allow families to pick up meals at the school during the summer or they could have them delivered. This waiver was good from March 16-August 31. Shortly before school started this fall, the waiver was extended through December 31, 2020. It has now been extended through June 30, 2021 and our district has committed to delivering the meals to families enrolled in our district who cannot attend school in person, or to families when they are home on Fridays. *Meals will be delivered on Wednesday, November 25, and Wednesday, December 23, during the holiday breaks. We will use our normal Friday delivery list.*

If you are not taking advantage of this program and would like to, please contact: Carolyn Orlowski, 715-743-8740 or email her at [corlowski@neillsville.12.wi.us](mailto:corlowski@neillsville.12.wi.us). When you call or email include your name, address, how many meals you will need, and on what days you will need the meals. You can request a different number of meals depending on the day of the week. When you call, please make sure you speak slowly and clearly.

### HOORAY FOR LUNCH LADIES AND BUS DRIVERS FOR THEIR HELP DURING THE SUMMER!!!

It has been our great pleasure to provide your families with free breakfasts and lunches. Since March the staff has prepared 84,477 breakfasts and 92,930 lunches - the majority of these have been delivered to the families. There have been heroes behind the scenes making this possible. The majority of the kitchen staff chose to continue working to make sure that your families could receive meals. There have been many adjustments the staff has had to make throughout and they have quickly made the changes without complaint.

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# "Zoom" into Agriculture

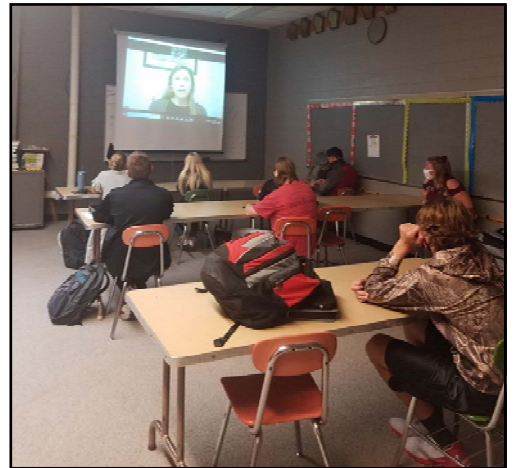
The agriculture classroom has been very fortunate to have many guest speakers this fall via Zoom. The virtual platform has allowed speakers from all over Wisconsin and the United States to share with students enrolled in agriculture courses. The students also have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about potential career opportunities.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has served as a great resource to the Wildlife class. Speakers have shared about the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress and the Jackson County elk herd. The Wildlife class also had a presentation from the International Owl Center in Houston, MN to learn about species of owls and the habitats they require.

There are several future Zoom events on the calendar for agriculture students, including the Wisconsin wolf biologist, a disease ecologist from the southern United States studying waterfowl, and a career panel of urban foresters in Wisconsin. If any local citizens have agriculture related items to share with students via Zoom, or want to recommend a speaker, please contact Mrs. Gerhardt via email at [agerhardt@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:agerhardt@neillsville.k12.wi.us)



Left: Andie at the International Owl Center shows JR the Screech owl to Neillsville HS students via Zoom.



Right: The view from Neillsville HS Agriculture room as students "Zoom" with career professionals during their class.

## Lunch Lady Land *continued* . . .

The staff does not normally work during the summer months yet this year they made the commitment to spend the summer providing meals to families. Those of you who chose to pick up your meals will remember Terrie Opelt, a 70-something who made it her job to make sure that each family picking up meals were made to feel special. In the kitchen we had Carmen Decorah, MiRa Liedtka, Janet Meredith, Amy Veltus, Linda Winegarden, Lori Schultz, Tina Pokallus and Sonya Hales-Brookhart working hard putting each meal together. We would also like to acknowledge the drivers who delivered the meals. Thank you to Jan Shilts, Todd Schmidt, Linda Winegarden, Floyd Schoen, Randy Ystad, Mike McDonald, Dale Erickson, Jennifer Pagenkopf, Jean Langreck, Karrie Schmidt, Heidi Magnuson and Trisha Ausauer. If we didn't have them doing their part we would never have been able to get all of the meals delivered to you.

And, THANK YOU!!! We have never received so much positive feedback from the community. It has thrilled us to receive all the cards, letters and pictures from all of you. Thank you for letting us take care of your children!

# com·mu·ni·ty

## noun

1. a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.



The past seven months have been anything but normal. As more time passes, and our new normal seems to be setting in for the long-haul, I don't want to lose sight of the good things that have occurred during the past months. March of 2020 was the start of all things COVID. Life as we all knew changed. The seemingly routine things in life seem now to be anything but routine. However, adversity has a way of bringing about some of the best qualities in people.

This past spring we saw an entire school community rally around our Class of 2020. There is no disputing the fact that those students missed out on many opportunities that cannot be replicated; and so will this current group of students. I cannot speak for others in our school community, but from my chair I try very hard to keep things in perspective and not lose focus of the things that I can exert some control over. COVID-19 is not something that I can control. The debate over to mask or not mask is not something that I can control. The personal viewpoints of others surrounding everything related to COVID-19 are not things that I can control. What I can control, to some extent, is helping to develop a plan to keep our school and community connected. Through the efforts of both school staff and community members we were able, to the best of our abilities while under significant restrictions, to give our graduates many public forms of appreciation and thanks.

I believe that this community, regardless of where we may all be at regarding our own personal beliefs, wants to see that our students are supported. I am probably not alone in wishing that things were different than they are now, but that's out of our hands to a large extent. The challenges we face are great, but the opportunity that our community has yet again to support all of our students is also great. There is an old saying, "It takes a community to raise a child". I believe that this community is doing very well in that regard! There are a lot of distractions in our world at the moment, but we must not lose sight of the fact that our students need us now more than ever. They need our community to keep them safe and supported for as long as it takes for us to get our "normal" back.

As we creep up on the holiday seasons, people are likely to gather and travel. I will simply say this: it will take our entire community to help keep everybody healthy and our school doors open. Whatever you do, please stay safe for the benefit of the community and stay well.

As always, it is a great day to be a Neillsville Warrior!

Mr. Anderson

High School Principal

You can access current operational plans on the district website:

<https://www.neillsville.k12.wi.us/>

## First Graders Focus on Reading Fluency

First Graders are off to a great start this unusual year! With having in-person learners and remote learners, our classrooms look and sound a bit different. We may be teaching traditionally for reading, and then be literally in more than two places at once while we teach the remotes and in-person learners through Google Meet or other technology for math.

In language arts we have been reading many stories that highlight the short vowel sounds and high frequency words. This gives us good practice on blending sounds into words for fluency. Reading Good Fit Books at home each night also improves fluency and comprehension. Families are encouraged to build the habit of reading into their nightly routine. While reading, we have been focusing on finding **key details** by using **text evidence**, **comparing** and **contrasting** fiction and nonfiction genres, and visualizing for comprehension. Two goals in our writing are to use capital letters to begin our sentences and choose the correct punctuation to end our sentences.

Our Common Core Math Expressions text keeps us thinking and talking mathematically. We are working on our "math talk" when the students lead our Daily Routine and explain examples of how they arrived at their answers. We have been using picture and circle drawings to solve addition and subtraction equations. We also have learned what equal and not equal mean. We are practicing the counting on strategy and being able to count on from the greater number. The students love using their math boards for daily math practice.

We have been busy with science, health and social studies themes, such as fall changes, fire safety, apples, pumpkins, and staying healthy. The first grade classes enjoyed a fall walk out to the "school forest" by the practice football field. It was very overgrown and the kids learned what cockleburrs were, but we had fun doing our bark rubbings and collecting leaves. We integrated the bark rubbings and leaves into real world learning with math, science, and reading. The local fire department donated fire safety bags filled with fun, educational activities. We enjoyed reading and learning from them!

Red Ribbon Week was promoted this year by participating in several school-wide activities. The end of the week we wore costumes to remind us to say "BOO" to drugs! The schoolwide behavior program is being implemented. Students can earn a Warrior Pride Ticket by showing safe, respectful, and responsible behaviors anywhere at school and on the bus. Once a week a student is chosen randomly from those Warrior Pride Tickets and is our Warrior of the Week! This student is recognized in the school for their positive choices. Our classrooms also get tokens for showing the Warrior Way. We earn "Positive Activities" for the class to participate in by collecting these tokens.



*Ms. Lindner's  
class enjoys  
their fall  
walk.*





## Middle School Social Emotional Learning



Middle School can be a challenging and exciting transition for students as they grow physically, socially, and emotionally. Sixth, seventh and eighth graders vary tremendously. It has been said that they are interested in just about everything . . . for about thirty minutes. These are some of their most formative years; they enter sixth grade as children and leave eighth grade as young adults.

My role in the middle school is to support students in several areas as a social emotional learning teacher. That is quite a mouthful, but essentially it means that I am a teacher that helps students develop some of the skills they need to navigate their world as it changes.



The middle school students work through guidance lessons that center around social emotional skills, learn stress management techniques, and study skills, just to name a few. Sixth and seventh grade students work through the Second Step and Brainwise Programs. Eighth graders also use Second Step and are joined by members of the Teen Leadership Council. These high school students act as mentors to our eighth graders as they transition to high school.

The month of October was Bullying Awareness Month. All middle school students took part in a lesson that illustrated what bullying is and is not. They learned how to be an upstander and what to do if they need help. Our other guidance lessons this month centered around brain development and “growing your brain”. We learned what happens to our brain when we learn something new and what happens when we feel overwhelmed or emotional.

Mrs. Jill Neville, Behavioral & Academic Interventionist

## Exploring Favorite Authors in 5K

Five-year-old kindergarten is off to a great start this year! We have roughly sixty students eager to learn with us! We have been working on skills such as letter and sound identification, rhyming, and onset sounds. The students are really getting the hang of all those letter skills! In math we have been working on comparing numbers, learning shapes and their attributes, and also on the numbers through 10. We learn to count, print the numbers, and identify the numbers out of order. We recently learned a math card game called Garbage which the kids have loved playing while practicing the order of numbers!

We have had two spotlight authors so far, which means that our classes have enjoyed many stories by these authors, and have seen the youthful writing styles of both David Shannon and Mo Willems.

Kindergartners learn a lot about fall through discussions and activities involving fall leaves, apples, and pumpkins. In September we had a chance to taste test different types of apples, which we then voted on and graphed to see the results of our favorites. We also took a nice walk to Schuster Park and enjoyed the sights, sounds, and smells of autumn. In November as we discuss Thanksgiving and traditions, we look forward to sharing what we are thankful for. This month we will also “meet” our new author and read stories by Laura Numeroff such as, *If you Give a Dog a Donut*.



## Lab Time Dominates High School Science

The Neillsville High School science classes have been working heavily in the lab during class. Working on skills of utilizing lab equipment and analyzing data to solve problems, students are gaining necessary skills in practical work. In biology classes, students have determined the identity of an unknown by utilizing chemical indicators and comparing data among all of the tests conducted. Biology students are now involved in determining the most effective conditions for the functioning of enzymes. Students will be using the enzyme lactase for these studies in early November. Students in chemistry have been utilizing food dyes and the process of chromatography to understand the chemical composition of the materials used in our food. Ecology classes have been studying food webs and predator prey relationships. Students in class were able to Zoom with an Owl Conservatory and observe the characteristics owls share in predation.



## Freshmen Study Native American Literature

Mrs. Short's freshmen have been busy so far this year. They have been reading some short stories and working on some commonly confused words. The American Literature class has spent time learning about Native American literature and is now reading *The Crucible*. There's nothing better than reading a story about witches around Halloween time! The Sports Literature class has spent time learning about the dangers of concussions to athletes, grit it takes to be a professional athlete, and they are completing their first novel in book club fashion.



# CHECK IT OUT!

Welcome back to school!

To start the school year I am visiting classrooms in the elementary with a book cart for students to choose books from. Grades 3 and up can check out books using the online catalog found on the Library Website:

<https://sites.google.com/student.neillsville.k12.wi.us/nsd-libraries/home>

The High School Library designed a cozy space for Distance Learning students to use while in class.



**Our goal is to  
get a book  
in every  
students' hands!**

Find a book with a school library barcode, just return it to any office or with meals. Thank you!!

## Library Staff

**Mrs. Melissa Strangfeld**  
Library Media Specialist

[mstrangfeld@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:mstrangfeld@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**Mrs. Deb Brey**  
LMC Library Staff

**Mrs. Laurie Klieforth**  
High School Library Staff

### Guidelines for borrowing a book:

- ⇒ Check out is for 2 weeks
- ⇒ If a student has an overdue book, we remind the student or send a sheet home & let the student check out 1 new book.
- ⇒ If a student has 2 or more overdue books, the library will remind the student and send a sheet home, while the student will still be allowed to check 1 book to keep in the classroom
- ⇒ We do not charge a fine for overdue books, **however**, we do charge a replacement fee for lost or damaged books.

## Third Graders Exercise Critical Thinking Skills

We have been very busy practicing safe social distancing by doing our 3 W's – Wear a mask, Wash your hands and Watch your distance - whenever possible, as well as learning all of our other classroom routines. Third grade students are now reading to learn, learning problem solving strategies and learning how to be respectful, responsible and safe.

Both our reading and math series are designed to better prepare our students through a rigorous reading, writing, and mathematics curriculum, as well as through the use of technology. **You can continue to support your child at home by reading at least 20 minutes daily.**

Our math series teaches our students to *understand* the how and the why for solving math problems. We have been learning many new math terms, skills, and strategies. The third graders really are using critical thinking skills and problem solving strategies. **You can continue to support your child at home by practicing the multiplication and division facts every day.**

Third grade is an exciting year. One way you can help is by reminding your child to bring a closed-top water bottle and clean mask to school *every day* as well as following the 3W's! We are looking forward to growing and learning all kinds of new things!

## Conquering the Curriculum in Middle School Math

The Middle School students have been working diligently throughout the first quarter of our interesting school year. Whether the students are attending in-person classes, or attending their classes virtually, all of our students at NMS have been continually growing both academically and emotionally! Mrs. Brown's middle school math classes have been working extremely hard to conquer the curriculum, even in challenging times.

The 8th grade students have been working on solving algebraic equations, and most recently started making geometric transformations. Students have been working on taking figures and making reflections (flips), translations (slides), and rotations (turns). One fun activity the students have participated in was a Tetris Transformation game. Students were given different tetris boards where they needed to identify and make transformations in order to fit the piece in the given spot. This activity allowed students to practice their transformation skills, while interacting with a fun game! The game also brought out the competitive edge in some of our students as they were quite passionate about sharing their specific moves with their partners during discussions.

7th grade students have been concentrating on integers and rational numbers. Students have learned how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide both integers and rational numbers without the use of a calculator. Talk about a ton of computation rules! Did you know a negative number plus a negative number equals a negative number; however, a negative number times a negative number equals a positive number? The students have been putting forth their best efforts to memorize and retain their understanding of these confusing rules! Recently, students spent their remote learning day at home working on a Spooky Integers activity. Students used their knowledge of integer rules to identify coordinates. They then had to plot those ordered pairs in a coordinate plane to identify the spooky figure: a ghost emoji!

All of the middle school teachers would like to take a moment and thank all of our hard-working students for working to their best potential every day! Whether working at school or at home, our students are doing their best! We would also like to thank all of the parents and guardians who are doing everything they can to help make their child's learning experience the best it can possibly be during this new learning experience!





## Engaging Students in Computer Coding

Computer Science News: Students are learning Computer Coding through a website called CodeMonkey. This website has a simple task, get the monkey to collect all the bananas. It starts with easier challenges and works up, level by level, to extremely difficult tasks. Students are able to progress to these higher levels by learning coding skills along the way. The game-like atmosphere is very relevant to the students as it engages them naturally with intrinsic motivation. Students can learn computer programming languages such as Coffeescript and Python. The other good piece is that students learn great problem solving skills such as: persistence, learning from their mistakes, asking for help, working cautiously, analytical thinking, etc.



This type of instruction is also differentiated. Each student can progress at a rate that they are comfortable with. Some of the more advanced students can work faster and achieve higher levels, while those that struggle with the content can work slower. Either way students show growth in learning; so it is good for high and low students alike. This self-paced program frees the teacher up to help individual students out while other students are on task. Because of the high level of engagement, there are less discipline issues in the classroom.

## US History Class Includes Pivotal Moments

The freshman students in Mr. Bernhagen's class have been off to a great start to the 2020 school year! Currently we are setting the stage for a number of big events like the civil war, reconstruction, the women's rights movement, and prohibition. The issue of slavery was a heavy topic, but kids did great with understanding the key concepts involved. Discussions were always lively and filled with positive comments that seemed to move the discussion forward.

## Second Graders Learn About Dinosaurs

Things in Grade 2 have been very busy this year! It's hard to believe we are almost done with the first quarter of school. Students have adjusted well to the face masks and other COVID rules. We have been working hard in the language arts area. We have finished our first full unit in our Reading Wonders series. We have been talking a lot about how families and pets are important and how we help or take care of them. We have also completed our first unit in math. We have covered lots of different topics like addition/subtraction, odd and even, and word problems. Keep working on reading and math at home. In science we covered natural resources and earth long ago, including dinosaurs. We have also spent time discussing elections in social studies. Our Guided Instruction time is up and running, too. During this time, students engage in phonics intervention practices, enrichment activities, and review grade level material. Parent/Teacher Conferences looked quite a bit different this year. Parents were emailed or called to go over progress reports. We recently covered two very important topics: Bullying and Being Drug Free! Each day, to promote these two topics, we had different "dress-up" days. Everyone had a great time participating in these special activities. With the weather changing, please remember warm-weather attire. Please label all clothing! Happy autumn to all!





## Sixth Graders Hone Their Writing Skills

Sixth grade's first quarter has been a blur! With every week being a new experience and adventure! Despite the craziness of the year, our 6th graders have been working hard and staying busy!

In ELA, 6th graders just wrote their FIRST essay for the year! They were to write a "How To Essay," teaching someone their same age how to do something. We had topics that ranged from how to make a grilled cheese sandwich to hooking up a manure spreader. Mrs. Kadlec can't wait to see how much this group grows their writing skills through the year! After wrapping up their essays, they spent some time learning how to properly summarize a story by reading "After The Fall" - a story about Humpty Dumpty overcoming his fear of heights (after of course falling). Ask a 6th grader to summarize something using "Somebody Wanted But So Then" skill we learned in class. When we were done summarizing, we talked about the goals we have had in both the past and present. With that conversation, we did a little project showcasing our goals and how we "soar" past them!

In science we are just finishing up Chapter 2, that deals with Laws of Motion. We will be having our Chapter 2 test coming up. We did a number of hands-on experiments to go along with the unit, dealing with momentum, mass, centripetal force, circular motion, and net force! The 6th graders are enjoying the new ideas and finding real life examples of these concepts.

In geography we are currently doing a research project that deals with a country from another part of the world. Each student is creating a slideshow that they will then present to the class. The goal is to assist our students to learn more about where these places are in the world, and the different religions, customs and foods, just to name a few.



*Sixth graders soaring past their goals!*



## Photos & Stories Needed for Yearbook

This year's yearbook class has many challenges not faced before. Many of the springtime activities that are normally in the book were cancelled, so innovation has been a priority for the students. They have been working hard to create interesting pages to put in this year's book. If you have any photos or stories that you think would be a great addition, please let one of our editors know. Editors are Brian Guizar-Ortiz and Mackenzie Keller.



## NEILLSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT PUPIL SERVICES TEAM

### Who is the Pupil Services Team?

The Pupil Services Team is made up of the school counselors, SEL teacher, school psychologist, director of special education, school nurse, grade level principals, and the school district superintendent.

### What does the Pupil Services Team do?

The Pupil Services Team is a group of educators that collaborates together to best support the needs of students in the Neillsville School District. The team is available to provide counseling, academic support, and connect students/families to additional resources.

### Reasons to Reach Out:

Please contact the pupil services team if you have social/emotional, mental health, or academic concerns for your child or need additional supports. In addition to our school counselors, we also have partnerships with the counseling services at Clark County Community Services and Children's WI. Please contact us for more information on making a referral to either of these agencies.

### People to Contact:

#### *Elementary School Contacts:*

**Elementary Counselor:** Mrs. Bri Collins 715-743-8717 or email [bacollins@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:bacollins@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**Elementary School Principal:** Mrs. Marcy Kunze 715-743-8712 or email [mkunze@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:mkunze@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

#### *Middle School Contacts:*

**Middle School SEL Teacher:** Mrs. Jill Neville 715-743-8808 or email [jneville@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:jneville@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**Middle/High School Counselor:** Mrs. Julia Backaus 715-743-8713 or email [jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**Middle School Principal:** Mrs. Kory Poeschel 715-743-8806 or email [kpoeschel@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:kpoeschel@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

#### *High School Contacts:*

**Middle/High School Counselor:** Mrs. Julia Backaus 715-743-8713 or email [jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**High School Principal:** Mr. Craig L. Anderson Ruskin 715-743-8736 or email [canderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:canderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

#### *District Wide Contacts:*

**School Psychologist:** Miss. Molly Brown 715-743-8719 or email [mbrown@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:mbrown@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**Director of Special Education/504 Coordinator:** Mrs. Tonia Anderson Ruskin 715-743-8716 or email [tanderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:tanderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**School District Superintendent:** Mr. John Gaier 715-743-8728 or email [jgaier@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:jgaier@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

**School District CNA (Health Services):** Mr. Sam Warden 715-7438753 or email [swarden@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:swarden@neillsville.k12.wi.us)

### Additional Contact Information (Available 24/7):

#### **Clark County Community Services/Northwest Connections CRISIS LINES:**

1-800-863-3560 or 715-743-3400, Text "HOPELINE" to 741741 (English) or "APOYO" to 893863 (Espanol)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Local Law Enforcement:** 715-743-3157, **Emergency:** 911