



88 MUSTANG MINUTES FALL 2013 ISSUE



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Superintendent's Corner
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- Gifted Education
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- ...much more!

Dates to Remember

- Saturday, September 28 — Charity Car Wash to Benefit NH-M Students — 9:00 am New Holland Community Center
- Monday, October 14 — No School in observance of Columbus Day
- Thursday, October 17 — Early Dismissal @ 1:30 pm—School Improvement
- Friday, October 25 — No School for Parent/Teacher Conferences

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SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

The 2013-2014 school year is off to a fantastic start! Many exciting new innovations continue to occur daily in this small learning community, and I am humbled to be able to share the good news with you, the community that makes it all possible!

First, our students are beginning to utilize Google Chromebooks and Apple iPads to supplement their lessons. While not a replacement for quality teaching, infusion of technology into the curriculum goes a long way in engaging students and encouraging higher level thinking skills. With roughly 90 Chromebooks and 30 iPads accessing our network, NH-M has upgraded its bandwidth while also saving money on its monthly telecommunications bills by taking advantage of Mediacom's coaxial Internet. While not as flexible and dependable as fiber optic, this will increase our download speeds by 13 1/2 times the current DSL rate!

Secondly, the NH-M Board of Education at its regularly scheduled September meeting adopted yet another balanced budget. This is not an easy task in this unhealthy economic climate,

coupled with a fiscal crisis from the state of Illinois. This community should be very proud of its board members for continuing to be good stewards of two of your most valued possessions: your children and your tax dollars.

While the state of Illinois does indeed owe money to NH-M, it does not seem to be a productive use of energy to keep a tally and bemoan these woes to the public. Simply because NH-M does not make public its prorated state payments does not mean our district is unaffected. We are in the unique position of absorbing most of these cuts through cautious spending and outside grants. I am happy to report that NH-M is still forecast to remain a district in ISBE's Financial Recognition, the highest rating possible for Illinois school districts to receive. Keeping these points in mind, our theme for this year is, "*Keep Calm and Mustang On!*"

Have a fantastic year!
Respectfully yours,

Todd Dugan

Todd Dugan
Superintendent

MEET THE MUSTANGS

Each issue, we will spotlight a member of the NH-M faculty/staff in this column. This month, we will meet **Miss Kirsten Larson**. Miss Larson is currently teaching Junior High Language Arts and Science at NH-M in her 3rd year with the District. Originally from Bloomington, Miss Larson graduated in May 2011 from Illinois State University. Currently, Miss Larson lives in Lincoln with her cat Stella. When asked what she loves most about working at NH-M, Kirsten replies, "getting to know each student...what they like, dislike and what makes them laugh." She has her own website, which can be accessed at: <https://sites.google.com/a/nhm88.com/misslarson>

NEW TECHNOLOGY

New technology is finally making its way into NH-M students' hands! Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Wankel enjoys utilizing the Apple iPads in her classroom as a way to appeal to each student's unique learning style. Not only does she enjoy using them, but her students love them. More than just toys, these devices can be powerful teaching tools, especially in the areas of Primary Reading. Shown to the right is Kindergartner Dylan as he reads a book with the "Homer" app.



STATE RAISES ISAT CUT SCORES

As was communicated last year, the Illinois State Board of Education voted to raise its cut scores for last year's (2012-2013) ISAT scores. This test, given to all 3rd-8th graders in the district has typically been a chance for NH-M to shine, with some of the highest scores in Logan County. As with all elementary schools in Illinois, these scores took a significant drop when the cut scores were raised to align more closely with the High School standardized test Prairie State Achievement Exam. While these scores fell at NH-M and every other school district in the state, they are by no means a sign of weakness in your child's education or your child's teacher's performance. More information will come, but NH-M will administer ISAT's for the last time this year, before switching to the new PARCC test. This test, aligned to the newly adopted Common Core State Standards, will replace the ISAT's and their measure of student mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards. For now, just know that NH-M students are achieving!!



2ND ANNUAL NH-M CAR WASH FOR CHARITY

NH-M will hold its annual Charity Car Wash to Benefit NH-M Students in Need fund.

Already ahead from last year thanks to a generous donation from New Holland Banking Center, this fund provides clothes, supplies and other needs that any student or family exhibits. This fund is replenished through donation, so oftentimes students will receive clothes and/or supplies with no questions asked. This kind of individual attention to students is what makes a school our size so effective! This year, the car wash will be held **this upcoming Saturday, September 28 in New Holland at the Community**



Center from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon, weather permitting. The cost is by free will donation, and all money goes straight back to the NH-M community!

NEW & IMPROVED NH-M WEBSITE!

Effective July 1st, our new and improved website went live. It's the same website address, <http://www.nhm88.com> but it has a new look and layout. While not all of the links are live just yet, it is our hope that the new website will make it easier to learn about the great things happening at NH-M on a daily basis. Please check it out, and as always, please feel free to let us know of any suggestions to improve.



SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

In order to give back to our community and also to teach students the benefits of becoming servants, NH-M teachers complete service learning projects throughout the school year. Past projects have benefitted the Humane Society of Logan County and the Logan County Food Pantry. This September, pop tabs will be collected for the Ronald McDonald House. Future projects will include a kindness campaign during American Education Week 2013. Stay tuned for more details!



READING TO ROMEO

NH-M has received the grant to maintain its funding of the “**Reading to Romeo**” program. This sustain grant has been awarded to NH-M annually since 2009. This is funded by the national “*Pets in the Classroom*” program, and is administered by Ms. Diane Bicknell at NH-M. Struggling readers sign up for slots to “read to Romeo” our reading pet. This has been shown to improve fluency and reading comprehension in struggling readers, as well as foster an increase in confidence in readers that might otherwise feel uncomfortable reading aloud. Overall, it’s another great program at NH-M from which our students benefit!



LOSS TO THE NH-M FAMILY

Heartfelt sympathies are extended to longtime NH-M bus driver Earl Baker in the recent loss of his wife, Deany, who passed away on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at their home in Middletown. Earl has been driving the Middletown route for decades, and the NH-M community was saddened by his loss. Rest in peace, Deany. Our thoughts are with Earl and her family at this time of sadness.



LCHS HOMECOMING

The Lincoln Community High School Homecoming Parade will be held on **Friday, October 4th, 2013**. As has been the tradition, the NH-M Kindergarten class will have its own float. Any student that wishes to attend this parade may leave school early if parents notify the school in the form of a note or a phone call. Go Railers!



GIFTED EDUCATION

This year, NH-M will be offering an enrichment offering for the students identified as “gifted and talented.” Years ago, many school districts offered this until reimbursement from the state of Illinois was eliminated. However, NH-M believes in meeting the needs of all students, wherever they may be. This programming will occur during the last period of the day, and students will be grouped by grades 2-5 and 6-8. A parent nomination form is available in the NH-M office, which will be considered with other indicators of student ability.



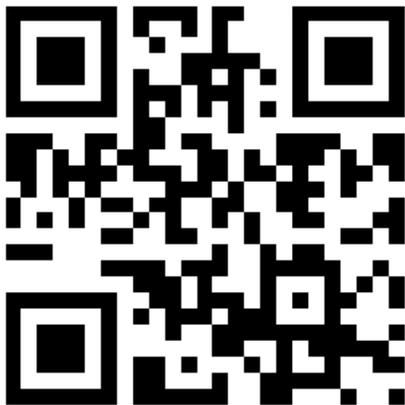
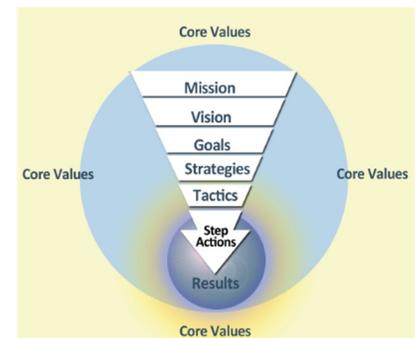
CHROMEBOOK ORIENTATION NIGHT 5-8

NH-M will begin deploying our Internet-based laptops to students in grades 5th thru 8th in early October. Each student will receive their own Chromebook which will enable them to harness the power of the Internet, as well as cloud-based computing within the classroom. While not a replacement for good teaching, technology is an effective tool in which great teaching becomes even better. In order to explain to parents the logistics of the Chromebook program at NH-M, ***we will be holding a mandatory Chromebook Orientation Night for parents of students in grades 5-8 on Tuesday, October 15 at 6:30 pm.*** If this evening does not accommodate your schedule, please call NH-M and make an appointment to attend a brief orientation session and sign the Chromebook agreement. Students will not be issued a Chromebook until their parents have signed this user agreement.



STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR NH-M

At the September meeting, the NH-M #88 Board of Education expressed a desire to seek community input on a 5-year Strategic Plan for the District. This steering committee will be responsible for planning academic, financial and facility goals for NH-M over the next 5 years. Community members will be asked to serve on this, so if you are interested, please call the school and let the office know you would be willing to serve on this important committee.



NH-M #88

Learning Is Our #1 Priority!

**BOXHOLDER
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