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ETTLE CREEK SCHOOL CORPORATION

“Our mission is to provide an exemplary educational experience that maximizes each student’s highest potential.”

“ P E O P L E A R E I M P O R T A N T H E R E ! ”



September 2016

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Dear Parents and Nettle Creek Community Members,

Consult any news source and you’ll find widely differing opinions about how well public schools are doing their jobs. At Nettle Creek School Corporation, while we keep an ear on state and national events, we keep the other ear, both eyes, and our hearts focused on the needs of our children right here in our own community. Based on past progress and to grow to the next level, we have identified four components to grow to help us serve our students better this year. The first focus is to further develop **WHAT WE KNOW**. To grow our professional practice, NCSC has hired Laura Swain, a professional instructional coach whose job



Nettle Creek Family of Schools

NCSC DIRECTION FOR 2016-2017



LEAD TO EXEMPLARY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

it is to support teachers by looking closely with them at instructional practices and to provide feedback. Parents and students have been instrumental in helping us address our second focus. To provide teachers and administrators with **THE TIME WE NEED** to undertake professional learning that will help identify more effective instructional practices, NCSC starts the school day thirty minutes later for students two days per month. Teachers have used this special time already to increase what they know about K-12 assessment. The third focus for the year is refining **THE TOOLS WE USE** in terms of technology to broaden the information students have available to them presented in a format that students find motivating. This year, students in grades 3-12 have their own Chromebooks which are growing to not only provide more information to students, but the Chromebooks are also becoming a means of communication between teachers and students since course assignments are provided to students online and in some classes, students complete homework online and turn in their assignments electronically. In this way, teachers can use more of their fifty-minute class periods teaching students. Finally, our fourth focus for this school year is **ACCOUNTABILITY**. Implementing

NWEA assessments in grades K-12 three times this year will help teachers plan lessons based on what students are ready to learn next, it will help students know how well they are making progress toward their learning goals, and it will tell parents to what extent their children’s learning is on track. We’ll keep you up-to-date on our progress as the year unfolds in each of these very important areas!



Literacy Is More Than Just A School Focus!

Everything parents do at home to prepare their children to learn to read is a great investment. The range of pre-reading skills children bring with them on the first day of school is quite broad. Regardless of this diversity, it is our mission at Nettle Creek School Corporation to assure our community that each of our students will learn to read well before they graduate. More time in a Kindergartener’s day is devoted to literacy than to anything else. Literacy is an essential life skill that we all need to be successful. Indicators along the way show that we reach this goal at high levels. The first literacy benchmark the state requires is the third-grade IREAD-3 test. Fully 90+% of our students pass this exam each year. As students progress through the grades, reading instruction is continuous. In the middle grades, learning

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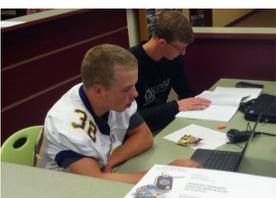
to read changes to reading to learn. Sometimes the conversation gets distracted by proponents of reading online versus those who champion reading in print. The fact is that our students need to know how to read well in both formats, and classrooms at Nettle Creek School Corporation rely on technology and textbooks to teach children what they need to know.

Community Readers Help The Cause! Community members acknowledge the importance of literacy for children. Ms. Wright and Ms. Smith of Community Readers regularly volunteer at Hagerstown Elementary School to share a good book and the love of reading with children in various grade levels. If being a volunteer reader sounds like a good match for your interests, please contact Ms. Hokey at HES (489.4555) for more information!



Students At Hagerstown Jr./Sr. High School Read, Too!

Reading at the Jr./Sr. high is equally important and can be found in every course. The English Department leads the way in reading instruction. In Mr. Lester's class as well as in each of the other English classes, reading skills are taught at a sophisticated level. Far beyond decoding, students at this point are challenged to learn to analyze and critique reading material. The work of classic authors as well as more contemporary works form the foundation of literacy instruction.



Students continue the path they started in elementary school reading for enjoyment as well as reading to learn. Homework in every class requires reading. Visit school on any day and you'll likely find student greeters at the front office reading when they are not welcoming visitors to school. Students in study hall work in groups on projects that require collaboration as well as strong reading skills right up until they graduate!



And Reading Doesn't Stop There!

Reading continues to be an essential skill for them after our students graduate. While for many Nettle Creek residents, reading becomes an enjoyable pastime, practically every profession and career requires reading. For a few lucky people such as our local librarian, Ms. Frasier, reading is both enjoyable and a part of her profession. She and her staff serve the literacy needs of our entire community. Drop by the Hagerstown Library anytime, and you will find them excited to tell you about a book you might find enjoyable or about a practical literacy resource that meets a need.



Reading Is Time Well-Spent!

Community members, Mr. and Ms. Mattheis, lead a very active life in the Nettle Creek area. Some claim that retirement is the very best stage in life because of the flexibility one acquires over how one spends one's time. Seniors, such as the Mattheises, regularly take advantage of all of the literacy resources available online and in our community. Mr. and Ms. Mattheis are a great example of neighbors who know the importance of reading, who started out young as readers, and who continue to read for enjoyment and to learn new things!



Grandma Rose Visits HES This Month!

Social skills development is a K-12 topic that receives continuous support in every classroom at Nettle Creek School Corporation. It is easy to tell that training for character traits such as respect and honesty begin in homes at Nettle Creek. We continue to reinforce these lessons as children learn to be successful in larger groups at school. Hagerstown Elementary School will host a visit by Grandma Rose who will talk with K-3 and 4-6 students about teasing and bullying to provide them with new information and to reinforce what they already know.



Tips Of The Tiger's Tail!

Parents and staff have contacted us recently to be sure that we are aware that their children are being well taken care of by NCSC staff who are going above and beyond the call of duty for our children. The first tip of the Tiger's tail goes to Ms. Limburg from a parent for thinking to pack along a wet cloth in a zip-loc bag on a fieldtrip to ease her child if she became overheated on the trip. While the parent admits it's a small gesture, to that student's family Ms. Limburg's thoughtfulness speaks volumes! Another tip of the Tiger's tail goes to Ms. Cash, our school nurse who works hard particularly at the beginning of the year making special arrangements for students with health needs and reassuring parents that their children are safe in a new school. And finally, Ms. Hokey sends a tip of the Tiger's tail to Ms. Cline, our music teacher, for the great job she does lending a hand during dismissal to be sure everything runs smoothly. Ms. Hokey says, "She's always doing those sorts of things, anticipating needs and helping without ever needing to be asked!"

