

Dear Staff,

Yahoo! What weather! While I haven't done anything particularly fun this weekend because of this rare January opportunity, I see the bees in my backyard hive are out and around getting a little exercise and looking for early signs of Spring. Later in the coming week when the colder weather returns, they will return to their Winter cluster in the hive to wait it out until the next warm day.

Schools across the state received some good news this past week. At least it was good news for NCSC when the state released the 2016 graduation rates. This most recent rate for Nettle Creek is 95.9% which is the highest graduation rate the state has on record for us. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to all employees who through their responsibilities support our students because it takes everyone's support to accomplish this. We acknowledge the contributions toward this success made our families and community members, too! Like the saying goes, "It takes a village!", and we are very fortunate to have our family's and community's support. In the end, an increasing graduation rate indicates that our students are the winners, and we need to send a tip of the Tiger's tail to them for doing what it took toward their success. The *Pal-Item* included an informative article that highlights each of the Wayne County school corporation's rates. In it, you will see that Hagerstown Jr./Sr. High School has the top graduation rate in Wayne County: <http://www.pal-item.com/story/news/education/2017/01/19/most-area-schools-grad-rates-top-90-percent/96623148/>

One related point that needs clarification is that the IDOE tracks three different graduation rates for school corporations. One of them is called the Waivered Rate. This is the rate that the IDOE tracks on their Compass website and describes the percent of students who earn diplomas. The second rate is the Non-Waivered Rate which is figured to include passing certain courses in a student's career, and the third is a rate that comes somewhere in between the Waivered Rate and the Non-Waivered Rate. Interestingly, the *Pal-Item* used the Waivered Rate in their article for Wayne County schools, and the *Courier-Times* used the third rate in its article describing the success of Henry County schools. Congratulations to Mr. Childs and his staff for assuring the success of our students!

STEM Education is alive and well at Hagerstown Elementary School! We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to STEM Coach Henderson and assistants Ms. Locke and Ms. Limburg as they spend time after school



with their students building robots that are suited to compete in area matches. Ms. Henderson wrote a grant recently that provided for her team with what was necessary to build and maneuver their four-wheeled machine. Along with reinforcing concepts students are learning in class, the Robo-Team is learning that spending time with their teachers after school in an area of common interest is fun.

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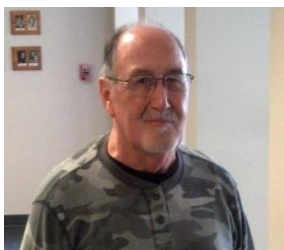
Nettle Creek Family of Schools



There's an early sign of Spring with a twist in Room 301 at the Jr./Sr. high. Students in Ms. Hendrickson's Ag class sewed their first set of lettuce for a crop in about thirty days. Students are learning first-hand about hydroponics as they raise lettuce in the school greenhouse without soil much like space travelers will have to grow food at sustainable settlements on Mars. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Ms. Hendrickson for teaching students to grow vegetables hydroponically. In other Ag news, we've learned that our Hagerstown FFA chapter won First Place in a chili cook-off sponsored by Cardinal Ethanol! What a great time of the year for chili!



One cannot help but notice the changes that Mr. Hillman and his Environmental Services team have undertaken across the corporation. And while their work continues in this regard, the improved facilities rely on good, old-fashioned elbow grease and a close eye to keep things looking great. One ES employee who makes this happen on a daily basis is Mr. Rhodus. Mr. Rhodus earns a tip of the Tiger's tail for the way he attends to detail in his areas of the jr./sr. high! Visitors, students and staff aren't in the building long before they see Mr. Rhodus hard at work. This man is ALWAYS busy! His attention to detail is phenomenal, and he understands that as long as there are staff and students to serve, his job is never done.



Mr. Childs sent a tip of the Tiger's tail this week that we all can celebrate! Friday was the deadline for students to finish their NWEA testing in his building. NWEA is new in grades 7-12 and as with anything new that is important, new systems have to be built to support the initiative. Classroom teachers and Special Education teachers excelled beyond their comfort zones to help children show what they know. Mr. Childs sent a tip of the Tiger's tail to Ms. Isaacs for helping students who needed to finish make-up MAP tests do so. It is not unusual for 20 or 30+ students to need a special place to take tests that they missed because of absences or for other reasons. Beyond administering tests, the whole staff is now in the process of meeting with each student to review their progress since the first MAP test of the year and to help students set learning goals for themselves for between now and the final MAP test at the end of the year. This is exactly the kind of support top-flight schools provide their students. We all send a tip of the Tiger's tail to the Jr./Sr. high school staff for not settling for anything less than the best they can provide for our students! Wait until you see their achievement results!!



Several students in the HHS Class of 2016 returned to talk here with upper classmen about their successes and challenges as first-year students in post-secondary education. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Ms. Olinger and Mr. Childs for making these arrangements. It is so good to see these students' smiles after a year away!



Yours for another successful week with children!

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