



# FAIRBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



OCTOBER 2007

SUPERINTENDENT - FRED HELMINK  
JR./SR HIGH PRINCIPAL - JEFF VETTER  
JEFFERSON INTERMEDIATE PRINCIPAL-  
ANNETTE WEISE

ASST. PRINCIPAL/ACTIVITIES DIR -  
KEVIN SIMMERMAN  
CENTRAL ELMENTARY PRINCIPAL  
JEREMY CHRISTIANSEN



## CALENDAR EVENTS

## *Thoughts of a Superintendent* **From the Desk of Fred Helmink**

OCTOBER 23  
7:00 5TH GRADE PRO-  
GRAM

NOVEMBER 3  
FROST FROLIC

NOVEMBER 9  
1:00 DISMISSAL IN-  
SERVICE

NOVEMBER 10  
7:30 NOVEMBER 11 3:00  
HIGH SCHOOL PLAY

NOVEMBER 12  
NO SCHOOL PREK-6  
PLANNING DAY

NOVEMBER 19  
7-12 P/T CONFERENCES  
5-9

NOVEMBER 21  
1:00 DISMISSAL  
THANKSGIVING

NOVEMBER 22 & 23  
NO SCHOOL THANKS-  
GIVING

### THE FIRES OF CRITICISM

For many people, constructive criticism is an oxymoron. They believe there is simply nothing constructive about criticism. Let's face it; most of us don't like criticism. When we receive it, therefore, we don't handle it properly. We seek to dispute the criticism, discredit the messenger or – even worse – to fire back flaming arrows of criticism at the enemy.

We all make mistakes in our lives. In my humble opinion, the biggest error people make is not owning up to the original mistake. As I am currently watching the University of Nebraska Chancellor Perlman press conference on the firing of the Athletic Director, one such individual comes to my mind. Had this person critically looked at himself and had a different attitude toward constructive criticism, the outcome might have been much different.

Criticism, however, can be our best friend if we adopt a positive attitude toward receiving it. Dr. Ernest Fitzgerald, a highly respected author, has

outlined three steps for managing criticism constructively. First, we should expect that we will receive criticism. This is especially true if you hold a public or elected position. No one lives in a vacuum void of judgments by others. It is helpful to remember that there are basically two types of criticism – sincere and insincere. Unfortunately, the insincere type seems to be the most prevalent. Some people mistakenly believe they can build themselves up by tearing others down. The motives of these individuals are usually transparent and it helps to remember that often the critic reveals more about himself than about the subject or object of the criticism.

The second pointer for effectively handling criticism is to learn from it. Abraham Lincoln had a tremendous ability to diffuse negative criticism. A member of his cabinet once called the President a fool. Lincoln replied, “If Stanton said I was a fool, then I must be one. For he is nearly always right.”

Keeping an open mind to criticism is easier said than done. Self-confident individuals, as was Lincoln, can accept criticism with grace without seeking to retaliate. Such people look at criticism simply as an opportunity to gain insights and to grow. Others who may be unsure of themselves or their position usually attempt to strike back at and throw suspicion on the other. It has been said that everyone should have at least two friends; one who agrees with him and another who does not. They are equally valuable.

The third point is to let your conscience be your guide as to whether there is value in the criticism. It is much easier to be critical than to be correct. Just because criticism is levied doesn't make it correct, truthful, or helpful. Criticism can be like steer horns: A point here, a point there, and a lot of bull in between. You have to be the final judge as to whether or not there is validity and substance in the criticism. If, after honest reflection, you deem the criticism to be unfounded or if it suggests something that is contrary to your beliefs, then disregard it. Lincoln once said, “If I were to read, and much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end.”

What can we learn from constructive criticism? As you have just read, that all depends on your perspective and open-mindedness. The person who handles criticism effectively, learning and becoming better and stronger because of it, is the type of person I wish to emulate. Although I will continue to make mistakes in my personal and professional life, I vow to view constructive the criticism I receive in a positive light. I hope you will as well.



## Bond Burning Celebration Scheduled for October 28th

The final payment for the 1989 Jr/Sr High School bond fund was made in September and now it is time to celebrate! Everyone is invited to join us in this celebration on Sunday, October 28th. The event will begin with a vocal music concert in the Burkley Fine Arts Center at 2:00 p.m. During the intermission of the concert, a slide show will be presented detailing the events leading to the suc-



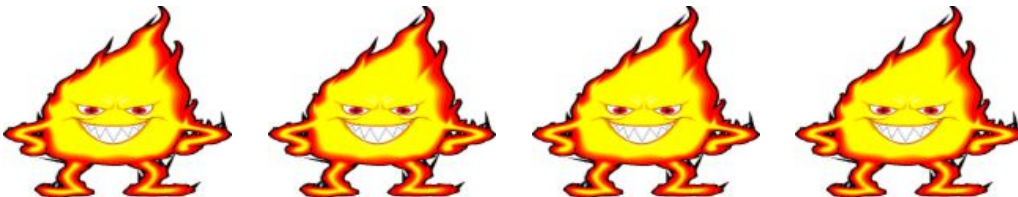
cessful passage of the bond election and the construction of the building.



Following the concert, Board members, administrators and community supporters who assisted in the passing of the election will be on hand to share their stories and memories. After concluding comments, the ceremonial “burning of the bonds” will take place in the front of the building and a reception with cake and ice cream will follow. Please join us as we celebrate and once again thank



all who were responsible for having the foresight to pass the bond issue and to make available this great facility for our students and community!



## **Let's Get Organized!!** **(adapted from NAESP's Report to Parents)**

Disorganization is a problem that can, and often time does, plague children. They may forget about homework, lose assignments, leave things at home or neglect to tell you about the day's field trip. Left unchecked, childhood disorganizations could develop into a lifelong problem. The key is to start now and help your children develop good organizational skills that will benefit them forever.

**Talk with the teacher.** Teachers work hard on developing students' organizational skills. Ask your child's teacher what skills he or she teaches in school and what you can do at home to follow up.

**Evening efforts pay morning rewards.** Chaotic mornings increase the chances of students forgetting lunches, homework, or projects. Get an earlier start by having your children pack their backpacks, pack their lunches, lay out their clothes, and get "must haves" together before they go to bed.

**Backpack cleaning.** Every day, your child should empty his or her backpack of schoolwork and notes from teachers. This exercise will help remind your child of items he or she may need to give to you.

**Homework help.** Some students get overwhelmed with homework assignments. Help your child get organized by developing a step-by-step plan to break the assignment into smaller "bites." Monitor your child's progress and encourage him or her as each step is completed. Also, let the teacher know that your child is overwhelmed; he or she may suggest a solution.

**Use a calendar.** Give your child his or her own planner or calendar in which they can write project deadlines, school events, lesson and practice times, and upcoming projects. Together, everyday, go through the calendar, noting what's coming up and adding new items.

**"To dos" are "must dos."** As soon as children are old enough to read and write, a "to do" list should become a part of their school lives. Show them how to make a list of that day's homework assignments and activities – and keep track of everything they've completed as well as those items they still need to finish. Knowing what needs to be done is an important step toward getting organized.

**A place for everything and everything in its place.** Make your children responsible for cleaning up and putting away the supplies, toys, or other items they get out during the day.

**Down with "pack rats!"** Make a monthly "dump it" day, when your children go through their materials and get rid of things that are no longer needed and file away things they may need in the future. Show them how to label and organize folders to keep their materials organized and easy to find.

**Set up rewards.** Together, set a goal – like getting all of their homework done for the week. Set up a small incentive – perhaps a treat or privilege – that they can work toward. Give bigger rewards for staying organized for longer periods and for achieving major goals, like getting a project done the day before it's due.

Finally, remember that parental involvement is essential. Some children just seem to be disorganized by nature – but that doesn't get them off the hook. They need your daily help to get their lives under control. Both of you will benefit. They'll have less stress and, almost assuredly, better grades. You'll enjoy a calmer child that you don't have to nag!!



**KINDERGARTEN FIELD TRIP**

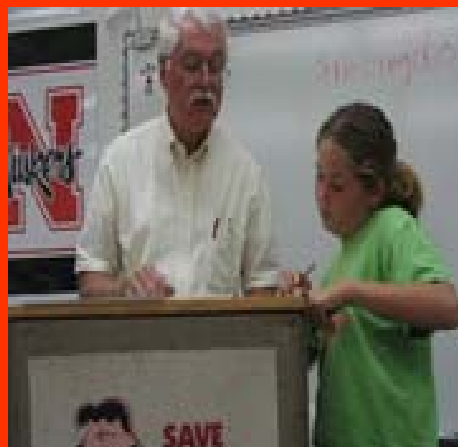
**FIRST GRADE FIELD TRIP**



**SUPER SUB  
MR. HOHBEIN**



**STEP AHEAD FAMILY FLING**



## **Celebrate Children's Book Week (November 12-18, 2007) by Raising a Reader**

Children learn to love the sound of language before they ever notice the existence of printed words on a page. They coo or babble when you talk or sing to them, and as they grow, rapidly pick up the concepts and words they hear used. Reading aloud with children is an essential component to language development and is one of the most important activities for preparing them to succeed as readers.

As parents and caregivers, you can help lay down the foundation for a love of reading and nurture children's development. Here are some things you can do to raise a lifelong reader:

### **Talk, Sing, and Play**

Babies delight in hearing language. Talk as you do simple everyday things together: recite nursery rhymes, and do finger plays, games and action songs.

### **Make Time to Read**

Try to read with your child every day at a regularly scheduled time. If possible, choose a time when you can be relaxed and not rushed. If you have more than one child, spend time reading with each child separately, especially if they're more than two years apart. On days that are particularly hectic, bring a few books when you take children along on errands. Taking time to read to children on a regular basis sends the message that reading is worthwhile.

### **One More Time...PLEASE?!**

As every adult who cares for children knows, they often ask to hear the same story again and again. They delight in knowing what comes next and often learn a favorite book so well that they can "read" it on their own. That favorite story may speak to your child's current interests and emotional needs, so it's important for the adults in their lives to be patient during this phase. Young children are eventually ready for different stories if they are continuously exposed to a variety of books.

### **Slow Down**

It's not just what you read to children, but how you read that matters. If adults rush through stories or read without enthusiasm, children quickly lose interest. Try to read with expression and use different voices for the characters. Reading at a leisurely pace with occasional pauses gives children time to take in what they hear, mull it over, and imagine the people, places, and events. Pose a question or make a remark that will prompt the child to think, express himself, or relate the story to his own experiences. It's also a good idea to follow children's cues. Sometimes they are caught up in the story and don't want stops and detours along the way.

### **Choose Books with Care**

Reading together often, you learn a lot about the kinds of books your child likes and understands. Visit the local library and involve your child in deciding what to bring home. Selecting books that relate to what's happening in the child's life at

that time is a good way to ease transitions and allay fears about upcoming events. Topics such as potty training, new siblings, adoption, or moving to a new home are covered in a variety of books that are written specifically for young children.

### **Surround Children with Reading Material**

In addition to library books, children also like having some books of their own that they can read whenever the mood strikes them. Affordable used books can be found at yard sales, thrift stores, secondhand book stores, and public library book sales. Consider subscribing to a good children's magazine--children love having something come in the mail just for them!

### **Don't Pressure Children About What or When to Read**

Nagging children about their reading habits may cause them to resist reading altogether. Some school-age children choose to read only comic books or fan magazines after their homework is completed. Try not to criticize--after all, they are reading. If a child makes a mistake when reading aloud, don't interrupt. If the mistake doesn't change the meaning, let it go.

### **Show That You Value Their Efforts**

Nothing is more important for fostering readers than showing genuine enthusiasm. Ask your child to read to you, a younger child, or a special visitor. Talk with him about what he is reading and respond positively.

## ***WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSING***

***Yes! It's early...but you never can predict the weather in Nebraska.***

In the event that school will be closed due to inclement weather, information will be broadcast on television station KOLN/KGIN (Channels 10 and 11), as well as on radio station KGMT (1310 AM)/KUTT (99.5 FM) in Fairbury. You can always log on to [fairburyjeffs.org](http://fairburyjeffs.org) for any announcements. In the event that school will have a "late start" due to inclement weather, information will be broadcast in the same manner. Regular dismissal times will occur and bus transportation will adjust and run accordingly. Please do not call school personnel when there is no closing announcement broadcast on television or radio.



# **SIXTH GRADE FIELD TRIP**

## Reminders Concerning the High School Parking Lot

By Jeff Vetter, Principal

Every year we seem to run into similar problems at the high school parking lot, primarily at dismissal time each day and at various activities. Some of these problems are inherently created due to the design of our driveway and inner circle parking lot. But with the help of the public many of the congestion issues we face can be eliminated.

At dismissal time we often have a number of vehicles arriving to pick up students. I am usually in the parking lot directing traffic by around 3:25 pm. Students are dismissed at 3:35 pm. I try to direct traffic to keep the flow moving in multiple directions without anyone having to wait too long. Please follow the hand signals of the person directing traffic. If you are waved through the stop sign in the inner circle you may proceed without stopping. Please do not attempt to slip in between cars without being directed to

do so. On the way into the inner parking lot try to stay in a single file line with the other cars. Double parking in an attempt to expedite the pick up of your student generally ends up clogging up the driveway and slowing down traffic for everyone. Do not stop to chat with people walking up the sidewalk that creates an unnecessary backlog.

When you arrive, if the line is backed up past the entrance to the main parking lot, you may be asked to turn into the main lot and park in order for the buses to turn into the main lot on their route to their designated student pick up spots behind the school.

If you are arriving to pick up a student after regular school hours who will be returning from an activity on a school bus, please **do not** park in the inner circle unless you are in one of the designated parking stalls. With cars lined around the inner circle and in the designated stalls the bus has a very difficult time getting to the drop off location within the inner circle.

Finally, we ask that you park only in **designated** parking spots for all activities at the school whether or not they are school sponsored. This would include dance recitals, community concerts and other types of public events. Parking in non-designated spots may create a problem for emergency vehicles should the need arise during a well attended activity at the school. We do reserve the right to have vehicles towed at owner expense if they are parked in non-designated parking locations.

