



# Our Great 308

The Superintendent's Newsletter

Nov 23

2015

Dear staff,

With the unseasonably warm temperatures, it's hard to believe Thanksgiving is upon us. But, here we are, and everyone is, no doubt, ready to enjoy some well-deserved time off. I hope you'll take time to pause and truly think of all there is to be thankful for. It is easy in today's world to focus on the negative. Take a few minutes to reflect on the positives in your life.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Dr. K.



## District Begins New Benefit for All Employees!

November 1 was a great day for all 308 employees! Although we are just beginning to get the word out, all employees are now eligible for benefits under our new Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) through New Directions.

What is an EAP you ask? It is far more than just another abbreviation for us to remember. The EAP gives all employees and those living in their house access to some pretty amazing benefits. And all at no cost to the employee and you do not have to take the district health insurance!

Benefits include up to six no-cost counseling sessions for help in dealing with the stressful and emotional issues that life can throw at us. There is also assistance for financial and credit counseling. Should you find yourself in need of legal advice, the benefits also include a free consultation with an attorney and discounted legal services should you decide to move forward with that legal counsel. Of course, all of this is completely confidential. Your personal information or fact that you've

utilized any of these services will never be shared with your employer.

You should have received a flier from Ray Hemman detailing the benefits and how to access them. If you didn't, please check your junk mail. You will also begin to see posters up around the buildings as we roll out the materials to publicize this new benefit and train supervisors on promoting it to our employees.

This service has been made possible through the Employee Health Pool Funds. When our staff is healthy, we all reap the benefits!

**Access New Directions EPA**  
**[www.ndba.com](http://www.ndba.com)**  
**Log-in Passcode: USD308**



## What's the District's Policy on Student Discipline?

I was recently having my regular conversation with the leadership of HNEA, and they asked me a good question. Has the district's philosophy or policy on discipline changed? This is a great question, and the answer may surprise you.

No, our policy on discipline has not changed. We did recently update board policy OE-11 to include positive and proactive measures to balance the policy statements on consequences.

So where does that leave us? It has become increasingly clear, we can't punish the bad behavior out of our kids. We may suppress bad behavior for a while, we may feel better personally if a student is not bothering us and our classroom, but ultimately,

punishment alone does not change behavior. If it did, administrators would apply that magic consequence and send all children back to you changed into the model students we all desire.

No, it doesn't work like that, and we all know it. I believe our district, like many others across our nation, are realizing that punishment alone can't fix our students. And as we get more and more students who have experienced trauma, who have not had the benefit of the "tribal elders" to guide parents in their child rearing, educators are experiencing rising frustrations as more children arrive without the skills to behave appropriately.

What are we to do? The answer lies with us. We can't control the child (at least initially) through punishment.

However, we have even greater power over the child if only we each realize it and choose to use it. Yes, the power is within us! We must make a choice to teach the child better behaviors, and that teaching is done through exposing the child to a system of positive and negative consequences. It takes both kinds and it takes time. Meaning, we have to choose to have a great deal of patience, but by doing so, we can make a lifelong difference—something a day or two of suspension can never do. While there will always be some behaviors that require principals to remove a student from the learning environment, educators across the country are realizing that the real strategies for changing behavior can only be applied when the child is here with us.

## Gannon Case Back in Court

The Kansas Supreme Court is once again deliberating the equity portion of the Gannon Case. The main question before the judges is whether or not the new Block Grant funding system is Constitutional — did it help or hurt equity in Kansas?

The Schools For Fair Funding position is that Block Grants hurt equity. The oral arguments went very well, but we must now wait and see what the court rules. We are anticipating a decision around

Christmas in time for the 2016 legislative session to have adequate time to respond to the ruling.

A bigger question will be how the state will respond to its self-created shortage of revenue if the court orders a return to the old funding system. This is something all educators should be watching intently throughout the 2016 legislative season.

## Maintain Don't Gain!



Way to go 308 Employees  
participating in this year's event!

## Decision on Boundaries Draws Near

Our four-month long study of boundaries will soon come to an end as the board approves the new boundary map. The new boundaries are necessary as the district removes a track of K-6 from McCandless in an effort to realize cost-savings as the district faces declining enrollment.

As boundaries are redrawn, class sizes will be made more similar, but not equal across the district. A decision was made to keep class sizes at the highest poverty buildings at 22 students per classroom.

All the buildings in the district will experience a level of change. Ave A and Lincoln will gain student enrollment; and it is likely Allen will see a slight increase as well.

McCandless will deal with the changes that come from the loss of one third of its population. All the other buildings will experience students coming and going as the boundaries change. We will all have adjustments to make.

We can help each other and our students adjust to these changes by taking some positive steps now. Talk positively about the other schools in our district to your students and their parents. Perception is a big problem in our district, in spite of the fact that there is now very little difference in our achievement results at most schools.

Reassure students that many of their friends will be going to their new school with them and that they will

be successful in making new friends when they arrive. If students have moved before, you can point out that they have successfully navigated such a change in the past. These small things can really help our district handle this transition smoothly.

As we prepare to make the boundary change, remember that staff members of 308 will still be allowed to request transfers of their students. Priority will be given to those who work in the building to which you are requesting transfer. All transfers are dependent upon whether or not space is available.



Happy  
Thanksgiving!



## Randy Sprick Spends Day in 308

Randy Sprick traveled to Hutchinson last week to spend time with Boys and Girls Club as they work to implement CHAMPS in their afterschool programs. Dr. Sprick is very interested in their work and came to observe. While he was here, he also spent time observing a handful of classrooms at Faris and will be doing a follow-up webinar with them on Tuesday to discuss his observations.

A small group of teachers from each building was invited to spend an hour after school with Dr. Sprick to get some of their implementation questions answered directly from the master. He then conducted a meeting with parents to demonstrate ways they can use concepts from CHAMPS at home with their children. Dr. Sprick is working on a component for parents to officially make a part of his programs.

# Recognizing 40+ Years of Devoted Service to Hutchinson Public Schools

## 40 Years of Service:

Linda Groves—HHS

## 35 Years of Service:

Susan Mallon—Morgan

Randy Norwood—SSC

Terri Oyler—Lincoln

## 30 Years of Service:

Tamme Buller—Hutcherson

Annette Emmert—HHS

Mary Smith—ESC

## 25 Years of Service:

Donna Bugner—AdCenter

Teresa Cantu—Ave A

Cindy Coopridner—AdCenter

Vicki Dority—Allen

Rainy Hester—Graber/Allen

Peggy Mendoza—Morgan

Monica Nelson—TSC

Cyndi Smith—McCandless

Dan Thompson—SSC

Jim Willis—ESC

## 20 Years of Service:

Donna Davis—HMS-7

Pam Downing—HMS-8

Luann Garland—Graber

Kay Jones—Morgan

Teresa Lehr—ESC

Aaron Miller—HHS

Robert Nixon—Wiley

Robin Pfannenstiel—Hutcherson

Sharla Powell—HMS-8

Vickie Quick—HMS-7

Todd Ray—HHS

Candy Reeves—Early Head Start

Clint Rodriguez—McCandless

Glinda Theus—Allen

Mark Thomas—HMS-

Becky Vieyra—SSC

Ron Weber—HHS

Ted Webster—HMS-7

Lisa Yantes—HHS

Shirley Yoder—CTEA

\*Completed years of service as of  
May, 2015

*Thank you for all you do and for the many  
lives you have touched throughout the years!*