

Iowa Valley Tiger Tracks

Education: A Community Partnership

Special points of interest:

- Nov. 1 Parent-Teacher Conf. 4-8 pm Elementary Only
- Nov. 2 Parent-Teacher Conf. 4-8 pm Elementary Only
- Nov. 3 No School
- Nov. 10 PTO Carnival @ Elementary
- Nov. 15 1 pm early dismissal
- Nov. 22-24 No School
- Nov. 29 Parent-Teacher Conf. 4-8 pm Jr.-Sr. High Only

Fall and Homecoming Go Hand-In-Hand by Mrs. Donita Joens, Supt.

Fall is one of the best times in education. Students are eager to start back to school because of being reunited with friends, establishing a routine, starting extra-curricular activities, and, yes, learning. It is kind of like the first quarter of a football game or the first game of a volleyball match; everyone is fired up and ready to get the job done. The first day of school in the fall is a time for new beginnings, hopes, dreams, challenges, and sometimes disappointments that turn out to help prepare students for life's challenges they soon will be faced with.

Homecoming is one of the highlights in the fall. The word itself means a return to one's home and a celebration at an educational institute. When alumni return to the school they graduated from, a sense of belonging to someone or something from the past can bring about a warm, homey feeling. As much as post-graduates go out and desire to explore the world, it is a wonderful, safe feeling when they return home and reminisce of fond school memories.

When alumni returned to Iowa Valley Community School District for Homecoming, they saw a few physical changes and heard about some academic changes. Here are some of these changes from one year ago:

- New gym, fitness center, lobby area, and concession stand at the elementary building
- Chromebooks, instead of iPads, for all students in grades 6-12
- CBM-R testing for elementary students
- STEM Science Camp in summer
- At-risk coordinator hired
- New water fountains for bottles
- Dugouts updated for baseball/softball
- New press box for football/track area
- Bleachers welded to meet safety regulations
- New gasoline bus (instead of the traditional diesel bus)
- New boiler for Jr./Sr. High School
- New security system for both buildings
- CAKE (Community and Kids in Education) Kick-Off
- Staff involved in Live Healthy Iowa competition

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In addition to many changes, some things did not. The one thing that did not change was the commitment and solid foundation both school districts retained in providing the best educational programs possible for its students. We have excellent staff members both in and out of the classrooms. Also, our school board provides the guidance, leadership, and resources to meet district goals in helping students become college and career ready.

I am proud to work with our outstanding school district as we provide top-notch educational programs for all of our students. Homecoming allows us to witness some of the changes and also experience some of the positive things that will never change. We hope you felt welcomed at this year's homecoming and are looking forward to the start of another great school year; let's keep moving forward with pride and progress in the 2017-2018 school year.

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Fall Fitness Day- October 4, 2017

Students participated in the Fall Fitness Day- Healthiest State Annual Walk, sponsored by the Live Healthy Iowa Program. Walking is one of the best ways to stay healthy as well as connect with others. By encouraging our youth to walk, it will help instill behaviors when they become adults and reduce a wide variety of health issues later in life. Here are some of the benefits of walking:

- Reduces anxiety
- Improves sleep quality
- Improves cognitive functioning
- Is inexpensive and can be done year round
- Reduces the development of diabetes
- Strengthens bones, balance, and energy levels
- Fun to do!

Thanks to Iowa Valley's school nurse, Jill Svare, Ryne Christner, Elementary PE instructor, and Cindy Miller, Elementary Principal, for organizing this activity for our youth.



Jr.-Sr. High News by Mr. Shawn Kreman, Jr.-Sr. High Principal

We're already at the ¾ point of the fall semester, and it won't be long before the Christmas holiday will be upon us. Believe me, I'm not trying to ruin anyone's fall spirit, but it seems like just the other day we started school in August and we're already in November and need to be ready for the colder weather to interrupt our outdoor activities.

To gain an understanding of what waits for students and staff at Iowa Valley Jr-Sr. High School, the rest of this month, and into December, I need to revisit an event that occurred last month.

On Monday, October 16 th, staff and students were involved in a law enforcement exercise that worked as both training for our district as well as a training opportunity for our local law enforcement, Iowa County Fire and Rescue, Iowa County EMS, Iowa County Sheriff's department and neighboring county authorities in place for evaluation of the exercise. For me, the day was well worth the time spent planning and executing, but also a little "nerve wrecking" as we know that an actual event like this could occur. I've been in education for over 30 years and during this time our country has faced many challenges and events that have, in some way or another, changed our thinking and how we need to improve our overall safety and preparedness. Most recently, the shootings that impacted several lives in Las Vegas are an example of this. How do we plan for something like that? Hard to say, but I can almost guarantee efforts are being made around the country to improve security and knowledge for those hosting major events or activities. 9/11 events changed national security measures as well as impacting many lives and families. I could go on and on about events that have happened in the past decade or two, but I don't want to bring up events that could easily have impacted lives here locally. Anyway, after the day was complete I could take a deep breath and appreciate all those involved to help "pull" this day off as well as the education that was involved from this exercise. It will make us more knowledgeable and help us to understand where we're at and how to make our building more secure and prepared in case of an actual occurrence or event.

The 21st Century is already 17 years old. For us to best prepare our students for the global society, we must challenge and expect more of them to be competitive individuals in our world. As a wise person once said, "it takes a village to raise a child." Our community must continue to "invest" in our students and be supportive partners to all students in the Iowa Valley School District. We host our 2nd parent-teacher conferences later this month and I look at these settings as another way to inform parents and guardians of not only the progress of their student but also a way to communicate face-to-face and discuss how their child is planning for life beyond high school. As a parent, please feel that you're more than welcome to contact our high school office, or more importantly, use our school website: <http://www.iowa-valley.k12.ia.us/> to get in touch with a teacher or staff member directly. It is our hope that all parents get a chance to "observe" how your student is progressing and see what we can do together to make the learning environment the most beneficial for our students.

This month we start winter activities as our wrestling and basketball teams begin practices, games, or meets. The junior high basketball and wrestling also begin their practices and will continue play into February. Our fine arts programs, as well, continue to practice and show their skills during our November and December contests and concerts. Please make a point to check out our school website and with that the monthly calendar and make a point to help support our students who help make our school proud of their accomplishments. Taking pride in what we do. Efforts are being made to carry us through the winter season, so far, and I like what is going on! Until next month, GO TIGERS!



Picture of the law enforcement exercise in our review of the October 16th event. Josh Humphrey, Iowa County Emergency Manager, is located by the piano.

Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! By Mrs. Pat Kooiker and Mrs. Susan Zozaya

Second grade students have been learning about plants and insects in science since the beginning of the school year. We have observed mealworms, milkweed bugs, brassica plants, silkworms, and caterpillars! The students have enjoyed watching the plants and insects grow and change as they go through their lifecycles. Our young scientists have documented the changes using their science journals.

Mary Bulger, the Iowa County Naturalist, presented a program called Monarch Migration to enhance our learning about insects. Students traveled through the monarch's lifecycle in a game where they encountered numerous obstacles that determined whether the monarchs would survive. Some were eaten by spiders, others died in a prairie fire, and the weather was too cold or too hot for some of the eggs. A few hatched and were able to make it to the next stage in the lifecycle. There were still more dangers ahead for the young caterpillars! The second graders were shocked to find out that only 2% of monarchs survive long enough to migrate! They also discovered that they could help the monarch population by planting milkweed.

We were also fortunate to use 3D google expedition goggles to watch various insects and animals act as pollinators in their natural habitats! Students were amazed as they explored in this 3D realm.

What an exciting time to be in 2nd grade!

Chromebooks in Sixth Grade By Mrs. Connie Howar & Mrs. Courtney Weaks

Our sixth graders were very excited to start using their Chromebooks the end of September. This year we decided that it would work out best to have the students become familiar with using the Chromebooks at school before allowing them to take them home. We are planning to send them home at Parent/Teacher Conferences on November 1st and 2nd. Thank you for all returning the paperwork for the Iowa Valley One to One Devices. The students have been using their Chromebooks for spelling, vocabulary, reading, social studies, writing, iReady math program, keyboarding, library, and a variety of learning games. We have gone over the responsibility of having a Chromebook and hope that the parents have taken time to discuss the device policy as well. We are very fortunate that our school provides this tool to enrich our students learning at Iowa Valley Schools!

Iowa Valley Professional Learning

November 2017



2017-2018

Professional Learning Targets

To provide an engaged educational environment that promotes student investment and continued learning.

Vocabulary:

Common Core Standards - statements that lay out a set of expectations regarding what learners must know and be able to do in different content areas (including 21st Century Skills) and across grade levels and ranges.

Feedback - information about learning that helps the owner take the next steps in their learning process.

- Teacher to student (evaluative)
- Teacher to student (descriptive)
- Student to student
- Student to teacher

Individual Professional Development Plan - each teacher will develop individual goals based on their own professional development needs; and centered around the Iowa teaching standards and student achievement goals that the school district has implemented. Teachers then reflect on their progress throughout the year.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) - a prevention-based framework of teams that solve problems based on data to improve student outcomes and instructional practices at the classroom, school, district, region, and state levels.

Opportunities are Always Available for Teacher Learning

Science K-8 (GWAEA)

Kindergarten through eighth grade science teachers have been training at Grant Wood Area Education Agency. With science kits that are aligned to Iowa Core and Next Generation Science Standards, Iowa Valley teachers have two-day trainings where they have hands on experiences with various science unit investigations. Students love these kits when they can become scientists themselves.

NWEA Assessments

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments continue to be given to all 7th through 11th graders. In the Fall and Spring, Iowa Valley Jr-Sr High School give four separate tests in Reading, Mathematics, Language, and Science. These assessment screeners are individualized, based on each student's answers, and they are encouraged to show growth from one screening to the next. Students and teachers really like these assessments because they are now web-based and they get immediate feedback on their scores. NWEA has also added new reports and teachers will be helping students set their own goals based on individual growth in all areas.

FastBridge Literacy Assessments

Teachers at the elementary are learning a new literacy screener, as the state has moved from the old Iowa TIER system to the FastBridge database. These formative assessments are given to all students (K-6) three times a year. Teachers are able to screen, identify and monitor student reading progress; and with new reports, these assessments can lead to faster interventions to help struggling students make greater growth in the areas of fluency and comprehension.

Next month look for more teacher learning focusing on At Risk, Science & Teacher Leadership.

Submitted by Mrs. Patty Miles
(Iowa Valley K-12 Instructional Coach)