

To: Dr. Steve Pegram, Superintendent

From: Mr. Michael Flax, Principal

Date: 6 March 2014

Re: Carbondale Attendance Center/Santa Fe Trail Jr. High March BOE Report

Field Trips – With the end of the school year, field trips are on everyone’s mind. There are lots of activities and trips to be made the last three months of school. The sixth grade field trip this year will include a visit to Forbes Field, WIBW for a tour and the taping of Midday in Kansas, and Cedar Crest for a tour of the Governor’s Mansion. Each group will attend on a different day, as there will be no charge for the smaller groups, but both WIBW and Cedar Crest will charge for large groups. The junior high will be taking the third quarter celebration trip to the Burlington Recreation Center next Thursday for the day. The fourth quarter celebration will be the annual visit to the Ed and Gretta Hug farm. The eighth grade Worlds of Fun trip is scheduled for Monday, May 12. This is the Monday after the recognition ceremony. The K-6 Field Day is on the calendar for Wednesday, May 7. This will be out at the high school football stadium in the afternoon. The fifth grade teachers have not made their plans for a trip at this time. However, they will begin the Star Base program at Forbes Field for a five week study. The first of those visits is Monday, March 31. The calendar gets very full and more activities will be added.

Activities Update – The scholars’ bowl season was scheduled to begin last Monday, March 3. However with our day off of school we did not attend. The seventh and eighth grade teams will have a full month of competition with five more dates. The first of those is taking place at the time of this writing (Thursday, March 6 at Hiawatha). Mrs. Tina McIver coaches the seventh grade, and Mrs. Pat Lira has the eighth grade team. Track begins with full practices next Monday, March 10. The team will practice at CAC, with an occasional visit to the high school for high jumpers to work out on the pits. We have more than 80 students participating in track this year. The coaches are Pat Lira, Steve Pegram, Tom Fenton, Adrienne Diggins, and Taylor Lenon. Their first meet is Thursday, April 3 at Silver Lake. In the past we have hosted several meets here, but with the condition of the track that is not possible this year. We are hosting one track meet, but it will be at Lyndon. Additionally we have turned one of our meets over to Holton to host. I am hopeful that we will get the track situation resolved so we can host track meets next year.

Staff Development – The final district staff development day was Monday, February 17. We started the day at SAC with presentations on the fifth McREL standard, new state assessment information, and a review of the PDC plan for teachers to earn professional development points towards licensure. We then moved to CAC for presentations on the last two Marzano strategies. Mrs. Hamit presented on Identifying Similarities and Differences, and the fifth grade teachers presented on Generating and Testing Hypotheses. We have now introduced and reviewed all nine of the instructional strategies as researched by the Pearson Group over the past three years at CAC. Teachers are actively utilizing these strategies as a regular part of their instruction, most often using the ones that are most applicable to their curriculum and style. Our afternoon was spent in the BYOC process, with teachers working both in grade level work and across grade levels. Each special education teacher met with the regular education teachers to give an IEP update on each identified student in their classrooms. It was a productive day.

Assessments - We are preparing the teachers for the upcoming state assessments. We are not doing any assessment preparation with students other than teaching them about the technology tools available to them during state assessments. Maggie Mead and I are working on a schedule for the assessments. All CAC/SFTJH students will be assessed in English/Language Arts and Math, while seventh graders will be taking the science assessment. All three areas will have two sessions of testing. That is a change from previous years, when reading and math consisted of three testing sessions. I am hopeful that the building will approach the assessments as necessary, but not pressure-filled. There will be no emphasis on how well students are expected to achieve, but the emphasis will be on students taking them seriously and doing their best.

Discipline Report – We have had one of the quietest quarters as far as discipline referrals go. With one day left in the quarter I have seen just 16 students for discipline issues, two of which were students with multiple tardies. After three unexcused tardies a detention is assigned. We have dealt with one significant bullying issue which resulted in an in-school suspension. The other referrals all resulted in either lunch detentions or after-school detentions. On the other side of the discipline issue is that of positive parent feedback. I have received more emails and calls from parents regarding the job that this staff is doing with the students this year. I have shared several of those with Dr. Pegram. Overall, the positive feedback has far outweighed any negative that I have received. I believe there are several reasons for that, one being that the staff has been very consistent in expectation over the past couple of years. Another is that we have an excellent group of eighth grade students, who have provided a very positive model of attitude for the other students. This is a group that collectively is one of the kindest and fun-loving we have had here.

Parent Meetings - We are completing our parent meetings regarding the Explore Tests and the pre enrollment for next year. I have been pleased with our feedback about the meetings and the staff who are hosting these from parents. I managed several seventh and eighth grade meetings, with one meeting scheduled for next week. This has been a very positive activity in the building. I believe that many parents are really beginning to see that our focus is truly on helping their students move forward, and that the district is committed to the education of each one individually. Even with No Child Left Behind past us, this would be a fitting moniker for the manner we have approached the Explore Tests and the conferences. We have decided that each staff member who has met with a seventh grader and his parents will also host that family for the eighth grade meeting. I had that question from a few parents, asking if I would be meeting with them again. I think that is a good idea, and I am looking forward to continuing this activity.

Submitted by Michael Flax