

Carbondale Attendance Center/Santa Fe Trail Jr. High
Board Report
November 2014

Activity Update – The fall sports season has come to a close. Our last events (football) concluded this past week, with the seventh graders playing Tuesday and the eighth graders on Thursday. The seventh graders lost the fifth place game, played at Wellsville. The eighth grade got a rematch with Burlington, having lost to them at their place during the regular season. The league championship game was played at SFT, with the Chargers falling again to Burlington, giving SFTJH a second place finish in the league. The girls' volleyball teams played their last matches in the Pioneer League Tournament at Osawatomie Saturday, October 4. The seventh grade finished in sixth place and the eighth grade finished at fourth in the league. The cross country team also completed their season recently. Each of the runners improved their personal best times over the course of the season. Killian Spoonemore, a seventh grader, finished the season as the league champion. We are now underway with wrestling practice and girls' basketball. The girls' basketball team has completed one date of competition as of this writing, with another game this evening. The boys' wrestling team will open with their first meet of the season next Tuesday at Santa Fe Trail High School. We are hosting Prairie View, Osawatomie, and Central Heights beginning at 4:15.

Evacuation Drill - This past Friday the students and staff practiced a very important drill. We evacuated the building as if there was an emergency situation. During the summer I worked on updating our building crisis plan, and with the assistance of then-SRO Derrick Feliciano, we created an evacuation plan to our football field. We believe that we have a sound plan for a building evacuation. I am going to have the evacuation plan posted on the CAC page of the district website in the future. I believe it is important for parents to know how we plan to keep our children safe away from the building. The crisis team met both before to review roles and procedures, and after to debrief from the activity. Of most importance is that we had the entire building evacuated to the football field and every student accounted for within approximately seven minutes. The successful practice of that drill is due to the work of the staff and the crisis team. I am hopeful that we will never have to use the plan in an actual emergency, but I am equally confident that we are able to do it swiftly and safely if it was necessary.

Aspire – We have completed our Aspire testing this past week. All students who were tested completed all five of the subtests. After a rocky start to the process, Mrs. Maggie Mead, Mrs. Susan Sisco, Mrs. Kristy Hamit and I were able to facilitate the testing sessions. Most students were tested at their actual grade level. However, a few adjustments were made for students who were multiple years below grade level. We did not test students on whom no valid data could be obtained. Yesterday, part of the freshmen class of SFT completed their testing in our building as well. Mrs. Melissa Strother, high school counselor, made the arrangements and organized the testing efforts for those students. Four teachers accompanied the freshmen over, and Maggie Mead and Susan Sisco monitored the technology labs with those teachers. We have closed out our testing sessions, and have made contact with the ACT-Aspire representative. We are hopeful to have results back before the holiday break.

Parent-Teacher Conferences – This Monday and Tuesday evenings we hosted the fall parent-teacher conferences. The fifth grade teachers had well over 90% attendance, with two of the teachers seeing the parents of every student. The main hallway was busy both evenings, with sixth, seventh and eighth grade teachers meeting with parents throughout the entire time frame of both days. With the new schedule this year, a factor that I hadn't considered in parent-teacher conferences is that most teachers have more students in their classes each day. That means there are more parents for each of those teachers to see. I visited with a few parents who were unable to see teachers due to the lines and the time constraints. Those teachers are making direct contacts with those parents to set up conferences or to meet over the phone. It made for two very long days, but we did not have many parents who were dissatisfied with the conferences and information exchanged.

Building Improvement Plan – We are focusing our efforts this year on the five areas in the building improvement plan. The teachers have been collecting chapter, unit, and/or general data on student performance. I have been working with one teacher in particular to create valid measures of student work. Through collaboration meetings, teachers are discussing both content and student personal issues, depending on the type of collaboration activity assigned. Hopefully by semester's end we will have some data tracked in all curricular areas at all grade levels. They continue their work on the BYOC process, and the BYOC User's Group has begun the process of reviewing and critiquing the documents that have been completed. Teacher evaluations are going along, with plans to complete several of the "tenured" teachers before Christmas as well as the new teachers. As far as the communications area, teachers are making contact with parents on a more frequent basis than in years past. I have made frequent contact with parents as well, for both good news and less than good news. Mrs. Hamit and I have addressed the faculty about their professional appearance. For the most part the entire faculty has been dressing the part of professionals, and we have been pleased with their professional demeanor and behavior as well. I am glad we have the building improvement goals in front of us, and our work at CAC revolves around them.

Spirit Week – We celebrated Red Ribbon Week this week with a Spirit Week sponsored by the student council. We prefer to hold these two together, rather than doing spirit week during homecoming and Red Ribbon Week in late October. That makes for one week of class distraction rather than two in the first semester. We held "Keep Our Futures Bright" as we avoid drugs and alcohol on Monday; Be Royal and stay off drugs on Tuesday; Drugs are a Thing of the Past and Not Part of Our Future on Wednesday; and Dress for Success day on Thursday. You might check out some of the pictures we have loaded on the website and on Facebook. We had a great deal of fun with the activity. Additionally, the fifth grade students have celebrated Halloween with a downtown Carbondale scavenger hunt. As I write this they are out and about. Last Friday all four grade levels participated in the first quarter celebration activities. Movies, games, dancing, and lots of snacks made for a great day for everyone in the building.

Discipline Report for 1st Quarter – With the completion of the first quarter, I am reviewing the discipline referrals so far this year. During the first quarter I have seen 45 students for discipline issues, which is in addition to those handled by the teachers without my assistance. 35 detentions, 2 in-school suspensions, and 3 out-of-school suspensions were issued. Five other referrals resulted in phone calls home. What is bothersome to me is that by comparison, I had 27

office referrals for the first quarter last year. I believe there is one main reason for the increased number of disciplinary action this year. The eighth grade class last year was a group that led the building very positively. We do not have that leadership this year. Almost one-half of the referrals so far this year are of current eighth grade students. The faculty will be reviewing this data and working on a plan to address student behavior.

Submitted by Michael Flax
30 October 2014