

Carbondale Attendance Center / Santa Fe Trail Junior High School
BOE Report –February 2017

The following is a report of the activities and events at the Carbondale Attendance Center / Santa Fe Trail Junior High for January and February 2017.

Chromebook Issues – We are working diligently to teach students the correct and appropriate use of the technology made available to them by the district. I currently have at least eight students (two junior high and six elementary students) who have suspended use of their Chromebooks. We try to not take the devices away, but when students repeatedly violate policy I do have them give them up for a time. One of the issues that arises is students using the email for gossip and bullying. Of course, usually when they do that their language is not school-appropriate, so we deal with that as well. Some unkind directives about the teaching staff and administration are found in those mails, too. (Sometimes between the spelling and the sentiment, I have to admit I literally laugh out loud.) Another issue with our students is getting on gaming sites when they are supposed to be doing classwork and activities. All in all, the great majority seem to use the Chromebooks as learning tools and treat them with respect and care.

Activities - We are almost half way through the boys' basketball season. Each week our teams square off against league competition, and they compete well. Last Saturday the seventh grade A team got their first win of the season in the WRMS Classic. The eighth grade team currently is in third place in the league. The quiz bowl teams have begun practice, gearing up for competitions to begin in February. Mrs. Gretta Hug and Mrs. Courtnee Maichel are the coaches for the teams. They practice a couple of times a week over the lunch period. I am looking forward to hosting two meets this year. Our dates are February 27 and March 14. Mr. Hug is looking for help, so if any of you are willing to work during these meets, let him hear from you.

Osage County Spelling Bee – This Friday we are hosting the Osage County Spelling Bee. At our building competition we determined our qualifiers for that event. Ari Delaney was our winner, and Kendalan VanCamp was our runner-up. Both of these girls will participate in the county bee. We are hosting at the Santa Fe Trail High School Fine Arts Auditorium. Thanks to Keith Johnson and the maintenance staff there for accommodating us. The winner of the Osage County Spelling Bee will advance to the state competition to be held at Seaman High School.

Sixth Grade Considerations – I sent a letter out to parents of current sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. The purpose was to get feedback from them regarding their child's experience with the change we made three years ago. Many parents responded, and I believe they were honest and direct in their feedback. For the most part, parents have been satisfied with the bell schedule, liked the smoother transition to junior high, and felt that overall things were good for their children. They did not like that sixth graders do not get recess time, which is something that we do not like either. There was a balance of those who liked changing teachers each hour and those who would prefer having one teacher all day in the classroom. Support classes are not available to our students

in sixth grade, nor is at-risk/title help able to fit in the current schedule. Mrs. Hamit and I would like to request two additional sixth grade teachers for next year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences – In March we are going to have our annual parent-teacher conferences. I have heard from many of you that you wished we still had the traditional conferences for junior high students. To that end, we are going back to two nights of parent-teacher conferences for the students in grades 6-8. From 4:00-7:00 on Monday, March 13 and Thursday, March 16 all teachers of grades 6-8 will be available for you to stop in and visit. If you would like additional time for a conference, don't hesitate to ask the teachers for that. For grades 4-5 we are making just a little change in conference times. Those teachers feel that they do not have ample time during the two night format to have quality conferences with parents. They will be contacting all parents to schedule conferences for any time during that week. They will try to accommodate individual parent schedules as much as possible. Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Hamit, and I will host the individual student/parent conferences to review the ACT Aspire results and work on the high school enrollment process/orientation.

B.U.G.S. – CAC and SFTJH have placed an emphasis on student behavior and leadership from the beginning of the year. In the past, we have had a student incentive program rewarding good behavior throughout the nomination of OSCARS. This year we are making a shift from the past, setting up and implementing the B.U.G.S. program. BUGS stands for Being an Unusually Good Student, and is designed to award students who follow our Charger Code of Conduct. Teachers and staff members can nominate individuals who they believe have done exceptionally well in regards to being Cooperative, Highly active learners, Academically successful, Respectful, Goal-oriented, Eager to give effort, Ready to learn, and being Self-motivated. Students who are nominated will receive recognition through a photo and small treat, and they will gain access to be in a drawing for larger incentives each nine weeks.

Drug Testing – I have had some difficulty with my communications with the Psychomedics Company this last semester. As a result, we have done one week of testing during the fall. I believe we have that worked out, and we will begin testing weekly starting next Monday.

PTO Read-a-Thon – The PTO is sponsoring a read-a-thon for our elementary and junior high students this month. Details have been sent out, students and classes have been activated, and the on-line sponsorship/donations will begin this week.

Music Festival – Mrs. Lari Jarrett received an invitation for our junior high music groups to participate in a Middle School Choir Festival. It is going to be held at Eisenhower Middle School in Topeka on March 13. I approved the request from Mrs. Jarrett, and we will be sending both groups to this event. Details will come later in the month. Our students have few opportunities for performance, so this is one more goal to work towards and chance to showcase their talents.

Submitted by Michael Flax
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