



WAHOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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Wahoo Public Schools

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Changes Highlight Academic Achievement in High School

by Hunter Richmond

As another school year begins at Wahoo High School, things may appear a little different.

The high school has added a 15-minute homeroom to the schedule affecting the length of each class period, and to accommodate the new schedule the lunch period times have changed a little.

In addition to these schedule changes, modifications have been made to the 2007-2008 "Wahoo High School Student/Parent Handbook".

This includes the use of a grade scale using the plus/minus system and new graduation requirements for the class of 2010 and beyond.

WHS has switched to a grade scale similar to the one used at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The new scale was implemented to bridge the gap of the seven-point

difference between each letter grade by using pluses and minuses. School board members passed the proposal last spring and administrators have been fine-tuning it since.

That includes using a strength of schedule system to determine class rank. Beginning with the class of 2010, class rank will be determined by multiplying the grade received in the class by the strength ranking of that class.

For example, a student who receives a grade of a "B" in a level two class would receive a 3.00 (on the 4-point scale) multiplied by the level of the class (for instance two) for a total score of six. This method will not impact GPA and will only be used to determine class rank.

"The strength of schedule should be available at the end of the first quarter," said Mr. Chris Arent, WHS principal.

"We are attempting to help our students in regard to the three additional R's that are prevalent in today's education. Those are rigor, relevance, and relationships," said Mr. Arent.

"We believe that through the academic changes we are implementing, the rigor and relevance of our curriculum and expectations in conjunction with the homerooms will allow students and staff to develop stronger relationships with each other," added Mr. Arent.

In addition to the new grade scale, new graduation requirements for the class of 2010 reflect improvement in state educational standards. Students must complete 45 English credits that must include a semester of speech.

Students must also complete 40 math credits.

"The goal is to see that students succeed to their fullest ability," said Mr. Arent.

Mr. Arent also believes challenging students in academics will better prepare them later in life. Most importantly, he would like students

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WHS Grade Scale

Grade	%	Grade Points
A+	98-100	4.00
A	95-97	4.00
A-	93-94	3.67
B+	90-92	3.33
B	87-89	3.00
B-	85-86	2.67
C+	82-84	2.33
C	79-81	2.00
C-	77-78	1.67
D+	75-76	1.33
D	72-74	1.00
D-	70-71	.67

New Curriculum Coordinator Promises to do "Whatever It Takes!"

by Taylor Kavan

Mrs. Sue Heine is changing the way Wahoo Public Schools looks at teaching.

Mrs. Heine is in her first year as the district's curriculum coordinator and assistant principal at Wahoo Middle School and High School.

As the curriculum coordinator, Mrs. Heine makes sure that state standards are being met and that all the required assessments are given and recorded to the Nebraska Department of Education.

Mrs. Heine will be working with teachers focusing on four main goals for the 2007-2008 school year.

Teachers will need to know what they want their students to learn. They need to know if the students have learned what they are being taught. Teachers then need to determine what to do if the students

didn't learn the material. And finally, they need to know what to do when the student has already learned it. Meeting these goals, teachers can be confident with how and what they are teaching.

"I've always been able to think of the big picture," said Mrs. Heine, which is what she is doing by focusing on curriculum development.

In addition to her duties as the curriculum coordinator, Mrs. Heine is also the assistant principal at the middle and high schools. In the principals' absence, Mrs. Heine will assume their duties as principal. She will also go to school activities and functions to make sure that the students are representing Wahoo in a positive way.

Mrs. Heine currently lives in Lincoln with her husband, Ralph. They are looking to move closer to Wahoo sometime in the near future.



Mrs. Sue Heine-Wahoo Public School's new curriculum coordinator and assistant principal at both the middle school and high school.

Middle School Monkey Business

The Wahoo Middle School was graced on August 22 with the presence of two special guests. The guests, a pair of gorillas, assisted with one of the Middle School's 2007-2008 school-wide themes – "Bananas For School!!!!"

During the first few days of school, every middle school student developed a personal goal for the school year. The students wrote these goals on paper bananas, which are posted in the middle school on a special bulletin board. These goals included such things as; "Make Honor Role For All Four Quarters, Make New Friends, Be Successful In Both Academics and Athletics, and Read

10 Books This Year." Wednesday was the big day in which these bananas were collected – which is where our special visitors came in.

Our friendly gorillas lead the students in chants, cheers, and dancing in an "I'm Bananas For School Celebration!!!" In addition, the gorillas gathered all of the banana goals for posting. Our guests and their hosts had a great time!!!!

We encourage our parents to discuss and support your student's goal for the 2007-2008 school year. Remember, we are going to do "Whatever It Takes!!!" to ensure that each student's goal is met.



These two gorillas are going bananas over the goals the middle school students set for the 2007-2008 school year.

High School Welcomes Three New Teachers

by Courtney Clifford and Erin Curran

Mathematics

The math department added a new face to the equation this year. Mrs. Mary Nuckolls was offered a part-time math position to teach all Algebra I classes.

She went to Wayne State College where she earned a B.S. degree in biology and a minor in math. She then furthered her education by attending UNO and receiving a B.A. degree in secondary education. Mrs. Nuckolls previously instructed at Gretna High School and Westside High School, and is now in her seventh year of teaching.

However, the fact that her children attend Wahoo Elementary was an appealing quality, and drew her to the Wahoo school system.

Her aspirations for this school year are "that the students in the class, by the end of the school year, are no longer afraid of math and have the confidence to tackle any problem given to them," said Mrs. Nuckolls.

Industrial Technology

"I want to help every student reach his or her maximum potential," said Mr. Kyle Weyers, the new industrial technology teacher who was hired when Don Ball retired at the end of the 2006-2007 school year.



From left: Mary Nuckolls, Kyle Weyers, and Brian Ross.

Mr. Weyers teaches Electric Vehicle, Metals, Auto I, Auto Reconstruction and CAD classes, which is a good fit because he enjoys working on cars and using his hands. He also looks forward to getting involved with coaching.

Mr. Weyers graduated from UNL and plans on returning to school to receive his master's degree.

Mr. Weyers' teaching career was inspired by his mother, a second-grade teacher in Lincoln and a 26-year veteran of the profession.

He recently bought a house in Wahoo because he likes the small-

town atmosphere and it's close to Lincoln where his family lives.

Mr. Weyers enjoys his classes and is looking forward to a great year.

English

The English department underwent a revision this year replacing Mrs. Kim Snyder with newcomer Mr. Brian Ross.

The University of Wyoming graduate has now entered his third year of teaching. Mr. Ross began his career at Cheyenne East High School in Wyoming.

Although the Wyoming native commutes from Omaha every day, several characteristics led him to Wahoo.

"I liked the idea of a smaller school," said Mr. Ross.

Mr. Ross said that he wants the students of Wahoo High School to know that he has an open door policy.

"I play more of a facilitator role," said Mr. Ross. "I like the students to find their own ways of learning."

Mr. Ross is ready to address any questions or concerns students or their parents may have.

This newsletter is created and published by the journalism class of Wahoo High School.

Any comments or suggestions should be directed to Mrs. Carol Mertl

at (402)443-4332

or email <cmertl@esu2.org>.

Elementary Halls See New Faces

by Felicia Brazda, Hilary Plybon, Jenifer Proctor and Samantha Timm



New elementary teachers from left: Monica Smith, Heather Aude, Laci Pebley, Josey Smedra, Jade Bang, and Brooke Maschmann.

First Grade

Another new teacher has joined the Wahoo Elementary Staff. Mrs. Heather Aude, the new elementary first grade teacher, is very pleased to start off the new 2007-08 school year.

After graduating from UNO, Mrs. Aude taught second grade for one year and first grade for three years in Omaha before she joined the Wahoo staff.

Mrs. Aude grew up in Blair and

enjoyed drama and playing softball throughout high school.

Mrs. Aude became a teacher because she loves kids and was inspired to do so by her mother who was also a teacher.

Mrs. Aude moved to Wahoo with her husband Derek, stepdaughter Imogen and bulldog Vida in June and is looking forward to getting involved with the school and the community.

When she is not teaching, she enjoys boating and water skiing.

"I like Wahoo and want to get involved with the community," said Mrs. Aude.

Her goals for this year are to get to know her students and their families and she is looking forward to helping each one.

Third Grade

Following in her grandmother's footsteps and after having found a positive role model in college, Ms. Josey Smedra was inspired to become a teacher.

She chose to teach elementary school because the children are eager to learn and they make her laugh.

Ms. Smedra earned her bachelor's degree at UNL and is in her first year of teaching.

Her first day at Wahoo Elementary School was exciting but nerve-racking because of all of the new responsibilities.

Ms. Smedra is looking forward to getting into the rhythm of teaching, staying organized, and making learning fun for the children.

"My goal is to prepare my third grade class for the future and help them mature from third graders into fourth graders and teach them skills they can use throughout their life," said Ms. Smedra.

Ms. Smedra moved to Wahoo about a month ago with her four-year-old son Taten and has enjoyed meeting new people. She chose Wahoo because it is close to Omaha and Lincoln where her family lives.

Second Grade

Ms. Brooke Maschmann, a new second grade teacher at Wahoo Elementary School, tries to make learning a more fun and enjoyable experience for her young students.

Ms. Maschmann has always wanted to be a teacher because she enjoys being around kids. She chose second grade because they're at the age when they are becoming more independent and it's a fun group to teach.

"I enjoy how every day is never the same. It's always something new and exciting," said Ms. Maschmann.

Ms. Maschmann uses fun songs to help students learn about math and other subjects and believes reading is very important at this age.

"I hope to make every student successful," said Ms. Maschmann, "while making learning enjoyable."

Ms. Maschmann grew up in Davenport, Neb., and earned her degree in education from Midland Lutheran College in 2005.

This is Ms. Maschmann's second year of teaching. Before coming to Wahoo she taught special education at Raymond Central Elementary School.

Special Education

Having been inspired by her own teachers growing up, Mrs. Monica Smith knew she wanted to be a teacher from an early age. She was so inspired by them that she is now a teacher.

Mrs. Smith is the new fourth and fifth grade special education teacher at Wahoo Elementary School.

Her first day with the kids was pure excitement. She is excited for the rest of the year. Having met her students, she is looking forward to getting to know them throughout the school year. She loves it thus far.

"I want to do everything I can to help kids perform their best," said Smith.

Mrs. Smith went to college at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Before coming to Wahoo she substituted at Lincoln Public

Libal Takes the Helm at the Middle School

by Benishia Siemer

Mr. Jason Libal was excited to kick off the 2007-2008 school year as the new Wahoo Middle School Principal. Mr. Libal is truly a mover and a shaker as he has been promoted for the second straight year in a row.

Last year Mr. Libal was promoted from the Behavior Disorder Teacher to Middle and High School Assistant Principal. This year Mr. Libal was promoted again to Middle School Principal. He enjoys working with middle school students, which makes it even more interesting.

Mr. Libal divides his time between his duties as the middle school principal and the district activities director.

Focusing on the WEBSS process to ensuring that it works effectively is just one of Mr. Libal's goals for this year.

The middle school added home-rooms and a new bell schedule for the 2007-2008 school year. He is pleased with the bell changes, as overlaps with shared high school



Mr. Libal gets comfortable in his new office.

staff will no longer be an issue.

Mr. Libal feels fortunate to have been given this new opportunity.

"I am very fortunate to move into this administrative position without moving my family," said Mr. Libal.

He lives in Wahoo with his wife Michelle and his two daughters. He says having the support of his family is most important to him.

Outside of school, Mr. Libal enjoys playing basketball and golf, and loves spending time with his family.

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School Vans Being Replaced by Safer Modes of Transportation

by Zach Bachmeier

A brand new Chevy Suburban sits in the parking lot west of the high school among the familiar big, yellow school buses and white school vans.

Wahoo Public Schools purchased the gray suburban over the summer when it was announced that the Nebraska State Department of Education would be outlawing fifteen-passenger vans. Nebraska is one of only nine states still using the vans to transport students.

The biggest safety issue with the fifteen-passenger vans is that the rollover rate is very high.

"The body design is too top-heavy and there are no roof bows," said Bob Chvatal, head of transportation and maintenance for Wahoo

Public Schools.

Mini-vans and sport utility vehicles (SUV's), provide a much safer alternative to the vans and the SUV's can come with four-wheel drive, which makes for safer driving in the snow.

The Nebraska State Board of Education will vote this fall to remove the fifteen-passenger vans from service by 2011. If the proposal passes at the Sept. 6 meeting, it will go to Attorney General Jon Bruning for approval and then to Governor Dave Heineman for his signature.

During the July 30 thunderstorm, the \$34,000 Suburban was damaged when high winds caused some items left over from the WPS auction to fall on it. The Suburban has been fixed and is ready for use.

New Elementary School Teachers

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Schools and Waverly. She now lives in Ceresco with her husband Blake. They are expecting their first child in November.

She loves spending time with her family and friends doing anything outdoors.

Mrs. Smith had many influences growing up. She had the teachers that taught her and her aunt and uncle. She wanted to become a teacher because she loves to be around kids and knowing she is helping them learn. She grew up with many kids because she was the oldest of six in her family.

First Grade

You might have seen Mrs. Laci Pebley roaming the halls of the elementary school last year as a substitute, but this year she has her very own first grade room.

Mrs. Pebley grew up in Richey, Mont., and graduated from Rocky Mountain College in Billings.

After considering a career in social work, Mrs. Pebley decided that teaching was a better fit for her.

"I always knew I wanted to help children," said Mrs. Pebley.

Mrs. Pebley is looking forward to her first year of teaching and hopes to be able to work with parents so that their children will be successful in school.

"I love that each day is different," said Mrs. Pebley. "I never know what is going to happen so it makes each day an adventure."

Mrs. Pebley lives in Omaha with her husband Shawn and enjoys going to new movies, watching television, hanging out with her husband and wake boarding.

School Changes

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to understand how important academics actually are.

It is certain that educational standards are on the rise and students are being put to the test. Are YOU ready?

*Welcome
Back
to
School!*

Website Created to Improve Teen Driving

There were 41 traffic deaths in Nebraska among drivers between the ages of 16 and 20 in 2005 -- the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

An interactive web site, www.drivingskillsforlife.com, enables young people to go online for hands-on training to improve their skills behind the wheel while offering an opportunity to win terrific prizes.

Vehicle crashes are the No. 1 killer of teenagers in America. Nearly 6,000 teens die annually in such accidents, according to the National Highway Traffic Administration. Studies demonstrate that crash rates decline considerably as young drivers gain experience, and Ford Motor

Company's Driving Skills for Life teen safety program helps young drivers learn to improve their skills on the road.

To help spread the message, Ford Motor Company's Driving Skills for Life program includes a Web site with innovative features designed to help young drivers improve their skills behind the wheel while offering an opportunity to win terrific prizes.

The web site is not just for teens, but also parents and educators. Parents can access tips to help their young drivers, and educators can do lesson plans for classroom instruction. All printed materials are free and can be downloaded from the web site.

Junior Mates Gearing Up for 2007-2008

by Shelby Partridge

As students return to the classroom this fall and are looking for ways to give back to their community, they may consider signing up to participate in the Junior Mates program.

Junior Mates is a school-based mentoring program facilitated for the past six years by Wahoo Elementary and Middle School Counselor Mrs. Ann Egr.

The program matches an elementary school student with a high school mentor who provides help with homework and friendship.

The idea is to help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-on-one rela-

tionships with mentors that have a measurable impact on youth.

High school students wanting to become a mentor must submit an application to Mrs. Egr, which is then followed by a simple training session. Students should be willing to meet with their mentee once a week for about thirty minutes.

"Any high school student is eligible to become a mentor and getting involved helps the younger children of our school district," said Mrs. Egr.

Mrs. Egr will hold an informational meeting on Wed., Sept. 5 for those wanting to learn more about the program or pick up an application.

Any parent who would like Wahoo High School to withhold their child's name, address, and phone number from military recruiters for the 2007-2008 school year should send a letter requesting this to:

**Terry Kopish, WHS Guidance
Wahoo Public High School
2201 N. Locust
Wahoo, Ne 68066**

New rosters will be available to recruiters beginning September 15, 2007.