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# CARDINAL CHATTER

## Leadership Conference Inspires Students

*By Morgan Allen, Media & Broadcasting Student*

Earlham students and staff members learned how they want to improve school climate at the Josten’s Leadership Conference, held in Ankeny on Tuesday, December 1.

Kayla Selby, secondary counselor at Earlham, stated, “We can start to create a snowball effect of being kind to people. That’s my goal, and I’m enlisting the students to help me out with that because I can’t do it on my own; and I think the staff can’t do it on their own either and we realize that.”

Both Selby and Marty Dalton, the at-risk coordinator for Earlham middle school, believe there is a growing problem at school. Dalton believes many students at Earlham don’t have a sense of belonging at school, which makes it difficult for them to learn effectively and have school pride.

Students at the leadership conference participated in hands-on activities to understand how to build relationships. Dalton enjoyed, “watching [the students] branch out, meet new people, and how easy that was based on what was done...creating an environment that nobody ever wants to leave.”

Selby met with Earlham student leaders to discuss what they learned from the conference and what they could do to make the school a better place for learning. “The kids had some really good ideas,” said Selby.

Sara Balch, an Earlham student who attended the conference, said she learned how important it is to build relationships with both students she does not have a strong relationship with and students she “thinks” she knows but might not know their everyday struggles.

Selby explained that the speaker at the conference said the most important things to create an everlasting positive school environment were play, trust, and learn. “And I think that is important and it seems kind of simple,” confesses Selby.

Balch and other leaders are already building relationships at school by simply talking to other students in the hallways and at lunch.



High school student leaders pose at the Leadership Conference.

### Upcoming Events

**Dec. 7-18**

K-6 Winter MAP  
Testing

**Dec. 9**

Dismiss @ 12:45 PM -  
Professional Development

**Dec. 22**

4-6 Grade Music  
Concert, 6 PM

**Dec. 24-Jan.2**

No School -  
Winter Break

See the master calendar at [home.ecsdcards.com](http://home.ecsdcards.com) for more scheduled events.

# Dismissal Procedure Reminders

With dropping temperatures, more adults are utilizing the pick-up lane during dismissal. To ensure this lane continues to run safely and efficiently, please review the following protocol with any adult that may be picking up your child at the end of the day.

All adults must wait outside the building to pick up a student. Adults may park in the school parking lot and walk to the building, or drive through the circle lane by the district office doors.

Anyone who uses the circle drive to pick-up a student should stay in the vehicle, wait for the student to come to the car, then circle back to the south onto 4th street to exit school grounds.

Buses are loaded near the greenhouse. After loading, all buses exit to the north onto 6th street. Students who drive exit the parking lot to the west to exit to 4th or 6th streets.

Elementary students are dismissed at 3:10, and secondary students are dismissed at 3:15. The district appreciates everyone’s cooperation and patience during dismissal times.

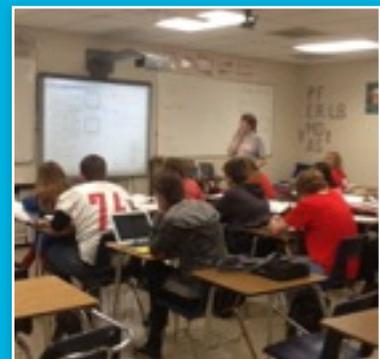
# Professional Development

During each scheduled professional development day, teachers meet with their district-wide Professional Learning Community (PLC) for up to one and a half hours to collaborate with their colleagues on a common growth goal.

This year, teachers are teamed based on their Individual Professional Development Plans and are focused on improving their practices in one of the following areas: Delivery of Instruction, Classroom Management, or Assessment.

Teachers work with their PLC to learn about and implement research-based instructional practices in the aforementioned areas, and then collect and analyze data to determine if the instructional changes positively affected student achievement.

## Cardinals in Action



## Elementary



Students are making great progress in ST Math, a program obtained through a STEM grant that provides a new visual approach to understanding math and problem-solving.

Our students have a goal to make to have each class make it through at least 75% of the ST Math curriculum. Currently, the building is averaging completion of the syllabus at 30%.

Because ST Math is a self-paced, individualized program, our students are able to advance to the next common core topic as soon as they show mastery in one level.

In November, we began offering 30-minute blocks of time before and after school for any K-5 student to spend additional time working in ST Math. These before and after school sessions, called JiJi Club, are held in the computer lab and supervised by one of our elementary teachers.

An ST Math trainer recently visited with classroom teachers to provide training on interpreting ST Math reports and incorporating ST Math concepts into whole group instruction.

## Technology

As the Technology Director it's my job to make sure that all of the stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community) have the tools, knowledge and infrastructure to do their jobs on a day-to-day basis. I'm very fortunate to work in a school district that regards technology as highly as I do.

I'm very grateful that we have a Superintendent and a School Board that believes in the worth in funding technology. Without a constant funding stream, we wouldn't have a SMART Board in every classroom or our 1:1 initiative. It's very gratifying to see the district commit two .5 FTE positions to integrating technology since it has become so essential to the way we do business. And finally it's so empowering to walk around Earlham and see students helping them out with little to big technology issues the same way teachers do.

I see teachers integrating technology into their curriculum not because they have to, but because they know it's best for the kids. I truly appreciate the opportunity to watch Earlham becoming one of the technology leaders in all the districts in the State of Iowa.

*-Cory Houghton*

## Secondary



When learning to ride a bicycle, the rider practices repeatedly, may fall and get scraped up, but the feedback from the fall helps the rider learn until the concept is mastered.

This childhood experience is a great analogy for standards-based grading. Assessments are tied to learning targets and standards, so students know exactly what they are learning, and rubrics and conversations provide feedback to guide areas of growth.

It is not uncommon for a student to be at a level 1 or 2 early in the learning process. However, students should show progress toward a deeper understanding, take responsibility for the learning process, and once they reach a high level of mastery, they should consistently remain there. The learning is not a one test and done, but spiraling and building concept upon concept.

We want our students to approach all learning as they did when they learned to ride a bike: keep practicing, trying, and using feedback until the concept is mastered.

## From the Board Table

At their meeting on November 18th, Jon Peterson and Janelle Conry presented the School Board with information about their roles as Instructional Coaches for the district. Mr. Peterson primarily works with teachers in the middle/high school grades and Mrs. Conry works with teachers in the elementary grades. This is the second year for both in their position as Instructional Coaches as part of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation grant that was awarded to the district. The Instructional Coaches role includes, but is not limited to: working with teachers in planning units or lessons, providing instructional resources, modeling instructional strategies, co-teaching and observing a teacher to provide no-evaluative feedback. Both Instructional Coaches have been provided training such as the Instructional Coaching Academy and will continue learning how best to assist classroom teachers through the Instructional Coaches Network organized by the AEA. Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Conry shared data from a survey of the district's teachers that indicated very positive feedback.

The Board also received a presentation from several students and Mr. Severson who assisted with the Meals for the Heartland and the World Food & Music Festival. In just over two hours, the students were able to package just over 33,000 meals for families in Iowa and all over the world. The World Food & Music Festival were cut short as the weather did not cooperate, but the students were able to experience a variety of foods and different cultures through this experience.

On behalf of the FFA, Cassie Bond, and Maddie Young presented information to the Board about their experience at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY. The Earlham FFA was represented by eight students who had the opportunity to visit the Caterpillar Plant, a large dairy farm operation, Churchill Downs, and the Louisville Slugger plant. The Convention featured workshops, learning sessions, a Career Fair, a College Fair and an Agriscience Fair. The students also shared information about the keynote speakers, especially the outgoing National FFA President. The students reported that this was a unique experience that will assist them in improving the local FFA Chapter.

The School Board held a special meeting on December 2 at 6 pm and will meet on December 16 at 6:00 PM in the school library.

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## Get the *Cardinal Chatter* delivered to your mailbox or inbox!



We will publish this newsletter monthly throughout the school year to keep our school community updated on our progress as a district. Copies will be available at local businesses and it will be posted on the school website, but you can elect to have the Chatter delivered directly to your home via email or mail!

Simply go online to <http://goo.gl/dJ08ds> or call the district office at 758-2214 to get signed up to receive all future issues!

## Looking for more information about our school?

Check out our school website at [home.ecsdcards.com](http://home.ecsdcards.com) for more announcements, calendar of events, staff directory and more.