

**CLASSES
RESUME
JANUARY 4**



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CARDINAL CHATTER

Iowa Department of Education Releases School Report Cards

As a result of 2013 legislative requirements (House File 215), the Iowa Department of Education developed a web-based tool that provides a snapshot of every Iowa public school's performance on certain educational measures, such as student attendance, proficiency rates and staff retention.

The Iowa School Report Card scores schools on up to eight educational measures and then assigns an overall rating to each school based on its performance on the measures. (Please note that these measures are based on limited data.) Based on each school's overall score, a rating is assigned.

The Iowa School Report Card is one tool to help Iowans understand how their schools are doing. However, these ratings do not represent a complete picture of any one school.

Earlham Elementary received an "Acceptable" ranking, the Middle School received an "High-Performing" rating, and the High School received a "Commendable" ranking.

You can locate any Iowa school's results, as well as more information about the Iowa School Report Card, on the following website:
www.educateiowa.gov/schoolreportcard



Upcoming Events

January 11

K-6 FAST testing begins

January 20

Dismiss @ 12:45 PM - Professional Development

February 1

Iowa Assessments Begin

February 2

Special Election for Bond Referendum

See the master calendar at home.ecsdcards.com for more scheduled events.

Assessment Preparation Guidance for Parents



All elementary students will take FAST assessments in January, and the Iowa Assessment is administered to students in grades 2-11 during the first week in February.

In order to help your student feel prepared and confident about the upcoming FAST and/or Iowa Assessments, do not place too much emphasis on the tests, which may make a student feel anxious or stressed.

Instead, maintain a typical schedule and atmosphere at home during the testing time, and make sure your child gets a sound sleep and healthy breakfast each day.

As with all school activities and academics, students should be encouraged to do their personal best on each assessment.

New Learning Management System Purchased

Several secondary teachers, along with a handful of elementary teachers, are using a new learning management system, called HaikuLearning, to electronically organize learning materials, communicate with students and parents, and calculate grades.



Each student and parent is given a unique log in to access the content in HaikuLearning. This new system has several benefits for students, teachers and parents. Essentially, it is a “one-stop shop” for students and parents to access information and materials for all the students’ courses, rather than accessing multiple different teacher websites. Daily emails are sent with reminders of due dates, upcoming assignments, and notifications of new content posted in courses. HaikuLearning also offers a traditional and standards-based grade book option.

Utilizing this new system supports our 1:1 and technology-rich learning environment and the transition to Standards-Based Grading. Additionally, it allows for increased communication with students and parents about student learning.

Dismissal Reminders

With winter upon us, we would like to ensure the our new dismissal procedures continue 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.

Elementary students are dismissed at 3:10, and secondary students are dismissed at 3:15.

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, to meet a student after school.

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. Those exiting the parking lot go to the west to exit to 4th or 6th streets.

School Finance Basics

Each year at about this same time, school districts all over the State of Iowa work to prepare a budget and tax rate for the following school year. In accordance with State Statutes, this process must be completed by April 15th each year. Financing for Iowa schools has some unique parameters by which all schools must abide.

First, there are several different funds that schools may have. In other words, there isn't just one big pot of money that can be used for whatever the district needs. Each district has a General Fund, which is mainly for the operations of the district. Districts also have a Management Fund, a Physical Plant and Equipment Fund, a Secure and Advanced Vision for Education (penny sales tax) fund, a Food Service Fund, and an Activity Fund. Some districts also have a Debt Service Fund and a Public Education Recreation Fund. Each of these funds have a specific purpose and some restrictions on how the money can be spent.

The General Fund receives revenues based upon the numbers of students who are residents of the district multiplied by the cost per pupil, which is determined by the Iowa Legislature. The revenue is a combination of local property taxes and state aid. The district also receives other revenues referred to as miscellaneous income which can be from grants, textbook fees, Federal funds, donations, and open enrollment of student in from neighboring districts to name a few. The General Funds are then used for items such as salaries, benefits, transportation, textbooks, utilities and maintenance as well as other operating expenses.

The Management Fund receives revenues from property taxes only. This fund is very restrictive in that it can only be used to pay for property/liability insurance, unemployment and retirement benefits.

The Physical Plant and Equipment Levy fund or PPEL, receives revenues from property taxes. The Earlham District has a Board approved \$.33/\$1,000 taxable valuation and a voter approved \$1.00/\$1,000 taxable valuation. Like the management fund, the PPEL fund is restricted in what the funds can be used for. For example, replacing a school bus or the roof on the building is an allowable use for the PPEL fund. At one time, the Earlham District used PPEL funds for repayment of bonded indebtedness. But, the PPEL fund are not allowed by State Statute to be used for salaries, benefits, textbooks or supplies.

The Secure and Advanced Vision for Education or SAVE fund is similar to the PPEL fund, but not exactly the same. The revenues from this fund are generated through the collection of a one cent sales tax and distributed to schools on a per pupil basis. The use of SAVE funds are very similar to the use of the PPEL funds listed above. The Earlham District is currently using the majority of the SAVE funds to pay for the football field/track project. In addition, these funds have been used in the past by the district to lower the property tax rate to repay the bonded indebtedness.

The Food Service fund is for the breakfast and lunch programs. This is a self-supporting fund in which revenues from sales of breakfast and lunch as well as subsidies from the State and Federal governments provide the revenues to pay for the cost of operating the program. This includes the cost of the food, supplies and labor costs.

The Activity fund is much like the Food Service fund as it is a self-supporting fund. Within the Activity fund are funds for athletics, FFA, Student Council and a host of other organizations. Each organization raises the funds to support their activity.

Debt Service funds are voter approved funds for major building projects that are paid through property taxes. The district is currently paying off General Obligation Bonds for the 2003 addition to the building that included elementary classrooms, music rooms, the practice gym and auditorium.

The Public Education and Recreation Levy is a property tax levy that very few school districts in Iowa have available. It is a voter approved property tax levy and normally it is used for playgrounds and other open areas used by the school and the general public for recreation purposes. Earlham School does not have this levy.

Should you have questions about the different funds, revenue sources, or spending restrictions for public schools, contact Mr. Wright, Superintendent.



Elementary



In December, all K-6 students took Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests. K-2 students took tests in reading and math, while 3-6 grade students took tests in reading, math, language and science.

These adaptive tests are administered on a computer. They provide students and teachers with a RIT score for each test, which can then be used to help determine what skills students are instructionally ready for. Teachers can also use this information to provide more individualized instruction in the classroom that better fits the students' instructional needs.

Each grade level has a goal for 80% of the students to meet their individual growth goals on the reading and math tests during the Spring testing session.

Individual student reports from the winter testing session will be sent home with students in January. These reports will provide detail on how each student performed during each testing season, as well as provide their target growth goal in each content area for Spring.

Technology



School districts are under the most scrutiny when it comes to protecting data. CIPA, FERPA, and HIPPA laws regulate how we as a district manage student data. Great pains are taken to make sure that data is secure and isolated so that only people that should have access to it, do have access to it.

Because we are a technology-rich 1:1 district, we often will use a third party vendor to accomplish an educational goal if we cannot do it in-house. If we ever have to pass data along to a 3rd party, we always make sure they attend to the same strict student data privacy policies that we do as a district.

Many third party applications we use have been signing the Student Data Pledge. Under this pledge, these companies promise to not sell student data while providing comprehensive security standards and diligent data collection.

To learn more about the Student Privacy Pledge, visit <http://studentprivacypledge.org/>.

Secondary



In addition to implementing SBG, teachers are also examining and incorporating strategies to enhance students' reading comprehension during Professional Development days.

As students encounter new content-specific vocabulary in their courses, it is necessary for them to have the skills to decipher and make sense of these new words in order to understand the concepts and to be able to interpret, analyze, summarize and make inferences when they read.

To build students' comprehension skills, teachers are implementing research-based reading strategies for their students such as close reading, vocabulary instruction, and reciprocal teaching.

These strategies require students to be active learners by annotating while reading, processing vocabulary words in multiple ways, and taking on specific roles while reading text.

By actively engaging students in concurrently using strategies while reading, student reading comprehension should increase.

From the Board Table

At the Earlham School Board meeting on December 16th, Mr. Hammen presented his written report with the Board. He shared an update on the ST Math program and the progress that students are making with the program. He also informed the Board that there is a chance that the district will not need to apply for a grant or use local funds to pay for the continued use of ST Math due to a relationship with John Deere. He also highlighted MAP Testing progress, a school safety workshop that he attended and collaboration with Young Explorers relative to PBIS.

Mrs. Knight presented her written report highlighting the recent accomplishments of the instrumental music program, including the Jazz Band and several Honor Bands. She informed the Board that the Drill Team received a Division I rating at contest and received an award for team Grade Point Average. She also shared progress with Standards Based Grading and the implementation of the Haiku program.

Mrs. Sheffield provided the Board with an update on the work being done by the District Leadership Team and reviewing feedback from staff to improve professional development. She also informed the Board about MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) and the goals and action plans being prepared for its implementation. She also told the Board about plans to personalize professional development in the future and how the Teacher Leadership and Compensation program is being evaluated.

Chris Swalla, representing the Facilities Committee, presented a petition to the Board requesting a Special Election for a Bond Referendum for a building project. After discussion, the School Board approved a Resolution Ordering a Special Election on the Issuance of \$5,000,000 General Obligation School Bonds as presented. The vote for approval of this project is set for February 2, 2016.

The Facilities Committee has been working with SVPA Architecture to update and modify the plans that were presented to the public and voted on in January 2014. While the new plans are similar to the plans presented previously and include the addition of six classrooms and converting the practice gym to a competition gym that would seat 1100 spectators, there are some differences. One change is to alter the main entrance by the district office so that all visitors during school hours will be routed through the office rather than into the commons area. This change is being made in an effort to increase the safety of students and staff of the district. Another change is to include both visitor and home locker rooms in the new addition, rather than two visitor locker rooms and a flex space. There are also some minor modifications in restroom and office space between the locker rooms and the gym.

These changes in the plans did not dramatically increase the building costs of the project. However, increasing construction costs has inflated the project budget to \$5,000,000, instead of the \$4,000,000 budget that was taken to election two years ago.

The School Board will be meeting on January 13th at 6:00 PM in the school library.

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 for more announcements, calendar of events, staff directory and more.