

Superintendent's Note

Hay Springs Public Schools Monthly Newsletter

As I write my November note I am reminded of the saying that "Time flies when you are having fun." Wow, we have completed the first academic quarter, our volleyball team has completed their season by a solid performance in Sub-districts against a very good Cody-Kilgore team. The Hay Springs Hawks Football team has ended a hard fought season with improvements made throughout the season and looking to a brighter future next year. Students are currently busy preparing for One-Act play performance, FBLA and FFA competition and will soon be practicing basketball and wrestling. As I write this note I am in route to taking six FFA members to the National FFA Convention and appreciate Mrs. Young for assisting in sponsoring and sharing the driving responsibilities during this trip.

As important as inter and extracurricular activities are for the development of our youth, the number one reason we are here is for the academic growth of our students. With the first quarter in the books some students find themselves needing to buckle down and get to work if they plan to advance in the educational process and we have many high performing students. Our student enrollment is up for the year with several option enrolled students. I am pleased to say that once again this year our students taking the ACT test in the 2018-19 school year have outscored their state counterparts in all the academic categories. We are blessed to have high quality students that work hard on a regular basis to make the most of their educational opportunities provided at Hay Springs Schools. These students could be commended for their efforts and accomplishments and serve as role models for all students.

We are blessed to have a very hard working, dedicated staff that spends endless hours preparing and delivery a quality education to our students. Our new staff members continue to be assets to our staff and have been very dedicated to our student's success, while challenging students with high expectations. As we look for ways to continue to improve the academic success of our students, I ask for your support of this process. If you had struggling students during the first nine weeks, as parents and guardians of your child, please make contact with their teachers on a regular basis during the remaining weeks of the semester to show your support for their academic performance. Middle level and high school students are not only provided the opportunity to improve academic performance by attending Friday school but are required to do so if they are struggling in two or more classes. Please encourage your students to make the most of this opportunity and to utilize the additional support provided by our staff. If students fail to attend Friday School, they will be expected to make arrangement to make up a minimum of equal time and possibly additional time if deemed necessary for their success. Parent and guardian support for your child's academic success is one of the most important ingredients you can provide to assist your child's academic success.

One Act Presents

→ **The Hay Springs High School One Act Play team will be performing "Citizen's Arrest" by Bobby Keniston. There will be two public performances TBA and the team will be competing at PANCO in Hay Springs on Friday, November 22nd. Districts will be held in early December.**

Principal's Playbook

It seems the initial months of the 2019-2020 academic year have evaporated into thin air. Our students and staff members have gotten off to a great start. The first term ended on October 10th, final grade reports were given to parents/guardians on October 24th during parent/teacher conferences. If you have not received your child's grade report please contact the front office.

Our students recently completed a series of on-line MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) tests in Reading, Language Arts, Math, and Science. The MAP tests are adaptive which helps teachers, parents, and the administration improve learning for all students and make informed decisions to promote our students' academic growth. Our teachers are currently visiting with their students to establish specific performance goals for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Our FFA, FBLA, band, vocal music, cross country, football, and volleyball programs have enjoyed the fall activities season. We encourage all of our students to take advantage of the wide array of co-curricular programs offered at Hay Springs Public School. Whichever activities our students choose to enjoy, it is important to note that the benefits are not limited to just higher academic achievement, benefits also include the opportunity to more fully develop their social skills, life skills, and God given talents.

Congratulations to the students that made the 1st quarter Honor Roll and/or achieved an attendance record of 95% or better. Please continue to reinforce healthy habits with your children that promote regular school attendance and homework completion.

Finally, the school community of Hay Springs has much to be grateful for during the upcoming season. I would like to wish all members of our school community a Happy Thanksgiving and safe, bountiful harvest season.

Respectfully,

Mark J. Hagge



Junior High Girls Basketball

Junior High Girls Basketball began practice on October 21st. The team consists of twelve girls from grades 6th through 8th. Three of them will be returning players from last year, so we will have a young team. The girls ended their last season with a 9-1 record, and were crowned Panhandle Conference Champions! The girls will once again be coached by Ron Olson and Linda Kudrna. The season opener will be at home on November 6th at 10:00 am against Sioux County. We are all looking forward to another great season!



BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

Quarter 1 Breakfast of Champions was held on Wednesday, October 23rd in the lobby of Lister Sage. This event celebrated quarter 1 students who received a Hawk Buck during quarter 1, entering them into a drawing for this event. Congratulations to all our outstanding Hawks students!



CONGRATS



LADY HAWKS VOLLEYBALL

The Lady Hawks entered the Panhandle Conference tournament on Saturday, October 19th as the #3 seed and came away with the Runner-Up Trophy. The Lady Hawks opened the tournament with a three set win over the Hemingford Lady Cats by scores of 27-25, 22-25 and 25-10.

Samantha Toof led the team with 7 kills and also added 7 assists and 5 digs. Katie Agler added 5 kills as well as 15 digs. Joce Varvel had a double double with 14 assists and 11 digs. In the second round the Lady Hawks took down the #2 seed Edgemont Lady Moguls for the second time this season by scores of 26-24, 22-25 and 25-4. The first two sets were tightly played as evidenced by the scores but in the third set Joce Varvel started the Lady Hawks off by serving 15 straight points before the Lady Moguls were able to break her serve. Varvel also added 9 assists, 6 kills and 15 digs. Bailey Scherbarth added 4 kills and 6 ace serves. In the Championship game, the Lady Hawks ran out of gas and struggled to find a groove against the Lady Warriors of Sioux County. The Lady Warriors won their second straight conference title by scores of 19-25 and 13-25. Statistically, Katie Agler led the Lady Hawks with 4 kills and 4 digs. "The girls are really starting to play good volleyball," said Coach Merritt. "I was so proud of their effort in the tournament and it's exciting to see them accomplishing some of their goals."

JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL



Although our season didn't wrap up with as many wins as the girls hoped we had a lot of wins in other ways! And a lot of the losses in the score book were some really close games that could have gone either way!

Coach Scherbarth and I had a fairly young team this year with a few girls brand new to the sport or this level of play. We spent a lot of time focusing on fundamentals and are so proud of each and every girl and the improvements that she made!

This season saw quite a few girls figure out their overhand serves, and get quite good at them! When looking beginning of the season to end we got easily double the number of setups and hits per game. Although some didn't result in the points going our way it was amazing to see the girls using all their skills. There were also a lot of plays where we were able to rally back and forth and keep the ball alive. We also had girls who moved into different roles from the year or years before, or even games before.

As always I will be sad to see the girls move on to the next level, but am so excited to see what they will do and am so proud of what they have accomplished! I can't wait for Midnight Madness to get one last opportunity to coach the 8th graders.

Our team this year consisted of 8th graders; Gabby, Alexa, and Abby Nelson, 7th graders; Darian, Lilly, Kaylee, Jacey, Zahaven, Jaelyn, and 6th graders; Bo, Julia, and Mya.

Music Notes



November Newsletter :

HS Music Notes

Please note a date change for the Santa Soup Cook-off and the Night, the Lights and Music concert! Both of these events will be held on Sunday, December 8th with the concert beginning at 3pm and the cook-off following the concert! Sorry for the change of date-please make this change on your calendars!

CALLING ALL SINGERS! We are having a community choir for the Nights, the Lights and Music concert. Rehearsals are on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm in the music room. Mrs. Jungck will again be our fearless leader! Spread the word and bring a friend!

Upcoming dates:

SUNDAY, December 8th

3pm Auditorium

ML/HS band & choir

PBIS:

Kindergarten through 12th grade students and staff gathered the morning of October 21st in celebration of our first Quarterly Assembly. The purpose of this assembly was to recognize the accomplishments of students during the first quarter of this school year. We kicked off the assembly with a student vs. teacher game of Hula Hoop Rock Paper Scissors. The teams were the Fifth Grade Class and the High School Teachers. The teachers ended up winning this competition! First Quarter Super Pass recipients were recognized at this time. The middle level and high school students who received Super Passes are: Jaiden Anderson, Hannah Hoos, Bailey Scherbarth, James Scherbarth, Gabe Varvel, Joce Varvel, RyLee Wolken, Noah Kelly, and Ava McKillip.

The PBIS Leadership Team presented a short skit, "The Life of a Hawk Buck" showing the journey a Hawk Buck makes once it is awarded to a student caught SOARING.

To wrap up the celebration there was a drawing for invitations to the Breakfast of Champions. At the end of each quarter all Hawk Bucks are entered into this drawing. 10% of Hawk Bucks for each grade level group are drawn. Students earning invitations to the first Breakfast of Champions on October 23rd are:

K-2 — Whitten, Darius, Jaxon, Grace, Ellerie, Reeve, Levi, Dawson, Rylee, and Danny

6-12 — Dakota, Abigail N., Parker, Gabby, Katelin, and Logan

The 3rd-5th grade group earned so many Hawk Bucks during first quarter they will be having their own Breakfast of Champions on October 30th. These students are:

3-5 — Bailey, Jacob, Cade, Megan, Riley J., Hunter, Tyson, Emma, Ever, Maddix, Emily, Bristol, Jaydub, Kaytee, Malorie, and Evan

Congratulations to all of our Hawks for a great First Quarter!

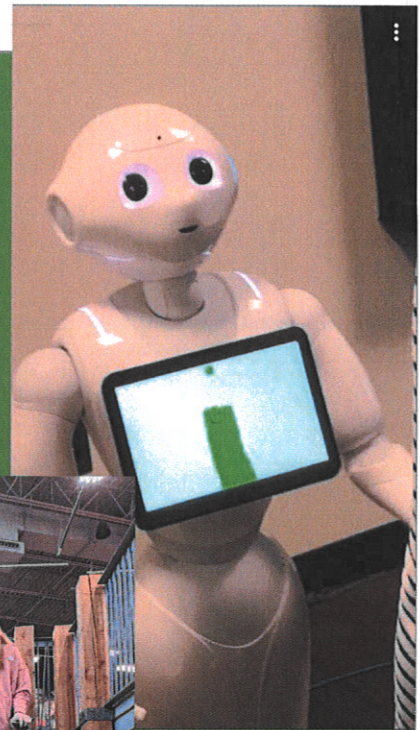
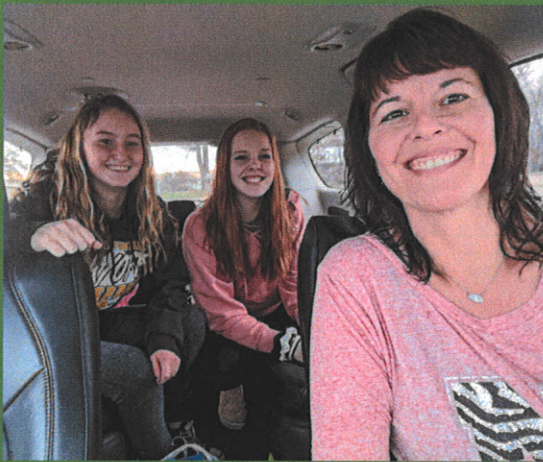
Parents- with the changing weather, you will need to start sending kids to school with heavy coats, hats, and gloves and snow boots.

Dates to Remember

- Important Reminders:
- Daylight Saving Time Ends - Nov. 3rd
- Veteran's Day Program/Lunch - Nov. 11th
- Picture Retake Day - Nov 12th
- Lion's Health Screening - Nov. 14th
- Thanksgiving Dinner - Nov. 21st
- NO SCHOOL - Nov. 27th and 28th Thanksgiving Break

CODE CRUSH

Freshmen Hallie Johnson and Breely Smith were chosen from over 100 students who applied, to attend UNO's College of Information Science and Technology's Code Crush during the month of October. Code Crush is an immersion in Technology experience for young ladies. The fall session of Code Crush included 32 girls from Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa. The girls got to ask questions of women in all kinds of technology fields, tour different technology companies, and even play with robots and experience the world of bioinformatics. Another session will be offered in the fall for girls to apply and another one in the summer, which is open to all girls. Both girls had a great time and agreed that the experience could change the direction of their future careers.



Red Ribbon Week



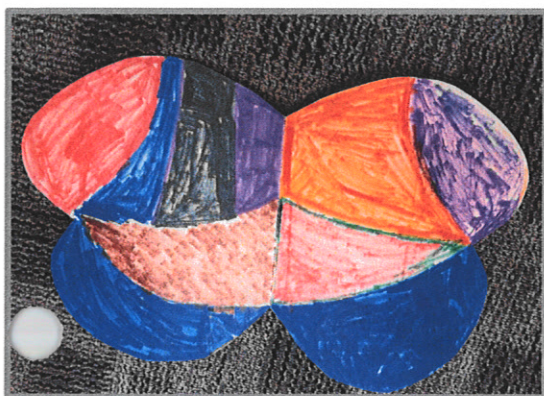
Hawks' Library News

October Activities

Symbolic Migration (<https://journeynorth.org/symbolic-migration>)

The Third Graders are participating in the Symbolic Migration of Monarch Butterflies. Each class participating creates individual butterflies with their first name, school, and teacher's email. The individual butterflies are placed in a larger butterfly folder with a group picture and a letter to children in Mexico. All the butterfly packets are sent to schools in the area near the Monarchs' winter sanctuaries. In March when the monarch butterflies migrate north, the paper butterflies are also sent north. Students don't receive their own butterflies, but butterflies made by other students in the United States and Canada.

Check out the Map of participants in this year's symbolic migration. Can you find us?
<https://maps.journeynorth.org/map/?year=2019&map=symbolic-monarch-sent>



Butterfly folder



Third Graders



Individual Butterflies

Top Checkouts in the First Quarter

High School Middle School

Winter
The Bat Boy
Brave
The Death Cure
Eruption
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
The Selection

Elementary - Picture Books

Should I share my Ice Cream?
Pete the Cat Saves Christmas
Pete the Cat and the Mission Cupcakes
Buzz Boy and Fly Guy
Creepy Pair of Underwear!
The Grouchy Ladybug
Pete the Cat and his Four Groovy Buttons

Chapter Books /Non Fiction

Bad Kitty vs. Uncle Murray
Bad Kitty meets the Baby
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: the Last Straw
The Usborne Book of Machines that Work
Auto Racing
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Double Down

Quote of the Month

"Books are the plane, and the train,
and the road. They are the destination,
and the journey. They are home."

— Anna Quindlen in
How Reading Changed My Life

FFA

From October 29 through November 2, our chapter advisor and ag teacher, Mr. Lechtenberg and six members of the Hay Springs FFA Chapter (Logan DeCoste, Braydon Binger, Jaiden Anderson, Hannah Hoos, Rylee Wolken, and myself, Jett Rasmussen) visited the great city of Indianapolis for the 92nd annual National FFA Convention and Expo. While there, we met other members from all over the country-places like Ohio, Kentucky, Minnesota, Texas, and many more. Throughout the three days at the convention, we were able to see some amazing national talent performances, got an inspirational and encouraging message from a leadership workshop, listened to speeches by Bob Goff, Michelle Poler, and National FFA Officers, and probably did too much shopping. On the third day of our trip, we were also lucky enough to be given a tour of Purdue University because Mr. Lechtenberg's brother, Vic, was the former dean of the college of agriculture. When we were given the tour, we got to learn about the fish hatchery, the meat lab, how big the classrooms are, the entomology labs, the "Farmer Olympics," and even where they brew their own beer! Overall, it was a great experience and an excellent learning opportunity, and although we had some long days, early mornings, and late nights, we would do it all again in a heartbeat. We are all grateful for the chance to go and expand our knowledge of FFA.



4H Opportunities



Baking Basics

The October Baking Basics will be held on November 1st. At this workshop youth will prepare for the colder weather while baking some delicious treats. The youth will continue to work on their sewing project for the year. The fee for this workshop is \$10. Please register by October 28th by contacting Melissa Mracek at mmracek2@unl.edu or (308) 327-2312. This event is open to anyone interested in baking and sewing projects.

The November session of Baking Basics will be on November 22nd. The fee is will be \$10. Please register by November 18th by contacting Melissa Mracek at mmracek2@unl.edu or (308) 327-2312.

Clover Bud Workshops

The Hay Springs Clover Bud workshop will be held on November 21st from 4 to 5 pm. Clover Bud members are youth between the ages of 5 and 7 as of January 1st, 2020. These youth will experience teamwork, social interaction, and decision-making skills while participating in hands on activities. Upon participating in these workshops, youth will have Clover Bud projects to display at the 2020 Sheridan County Fair. To register your child for these FREE events please contact Erika Gaswick or the Nebraska Extension Sheridan County office at (308) 327-2312 by November 14th.

4-H Enrollment is now Open!!

Youth interested in participating in 4-H throughout this year can enroll at <http://ne.4honline.com>. If your child is a member of the robotics teams, they will need to register before the competition in January. If you have registered previously, use the same login and password as before. Cannot remember your password? You can contact the Extension Office to have it reset. If you have any questions or need assistance feel free to contact the Extension office at (308) 327-2312.

NOVEMBER 2019

Happy Thanksgiving

Hay Springs School

Cafeteria

- *PreK-12 Breakfast & Lunch Menus
- *All Meals are served with 3 choices of Milk & 100% Juice. Water is always available in the cafeteria area.
- *Fruit & Veggie Bar is offered with every meal.
- *There are 3 main meal choices offered daily.
- *Menus are subject to change without notice.
- *BTS=Beef To School

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<u>"This Institution is an equal opportunity provider."</u>						
3	4 Breakfast:Dutch Waffles Lunch:Orange Chicken/Rice/Fortune Cookie	5 Breakfast: Biscuits & Gravy Lunch: Chili/Cinnamon Roll	6 Breakfast: Pizza Lunch: Sloppy Joes/Tots	7 Breakfast: Omelet/Toast Lunch:Lasagna/Garlic Bread	8	9
10	11 Breakfast:Waffles Veterans Day Dinner: Beef Patty/Mashed Pot.&Gravy/Roll	12 Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwich Lunch: Tacos/Potato Triangle	13 Breakfast: Tornado Lunch: Corn Dogs/Baked Beans	14 Breakfast: Omelet/Toast Lunch: BTS Burger/Chips	15	16
17	18 Breakfast: Burritos Lunch: Burritos/Corn	19 Breakfast: Casserole Lunch: Variety Of Soups/Bread Stick	20 Breakfast: French Toast Sticks Lunch: Chicken Sandwich/Chips	21 Breakfast: Omelet/Toast Thanksgiving Day Dinner	22	23
24	25 Breakfast: Biscuits&Gravy Lunch: Walking Taco/Green Beans	26 Breakfast: Pizza Lunch: Cooks Choice	27 NO SCHOOL	28  HAPPY THANKSGIVING NO SCHOOL	29	30
NOTES: A Very Special Thank You to Greg & Megan Heiting with Heiting Farms for the very generous donation of beef this past month. It is such an awesome thing to be able to start the school year off with the freezer full of high quality beef!! Thank You Again!						



EducationQuest Foundation

College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

November 2019

Seniors...a reminder of what to do this fall

There's A LOT going on right now with the financial aid and college admission processes, but don't get overwhelmed! Here's a recap of tasks you should complete this fall to stay on track to college.

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- First, create an FSA ID for you and one for a parent at fsaid.ed.gov. You'll need it to access and sign the FAFSA. [Click here](#) for instructions.
- Review our [FAFSA Checklist](#) for a list of items to gather before you start the form.
- Complete the FAFSA at fafsa.gov. You may also complete it via the myStudentAid app for iOS and Android.
- For *free* help with the FAFSA, see [FAFSA Tools](#) at EducationQuest.org or call EducationQuest to make an appointment: Omaha – 888.357.6300, Lincoln – 800.303.3745, Kearney – 800.666.3721, or Scottsbluff – 800.303.3745, ext. 6654.

Apply to your top college choices

If you attend one of nearly 200 Nebraska high schools holding *Apply2College* events this fall, you'll get help with your applications. If not, [here are steps](#) you should take to apply.

Retake the ACT and/or SAT. Colleges use your best scores for college admission and scholarships.

Get serious about applying for scholarships. See [ScholarshipQuest](#) at EducationQuest.org for Nebraska-based scholarships and a list of national search sites.

Juniors...start researching colleges

If you narrow your college choices by the end of your junior year, your senior year will be less stressful. Here's how to get started:

Review [College Profiles](#) at EducationQuest.org for information about colleges in Nebraska and across the country. If you're interested in an out-of-state school, check out the [Midwest Student Exchange Program](#) to learn about tuition discounts.

Meet with college representatives who visit your school, and then visit the websites of the colleges that interest you to learn more about the schools.

Once you've narrowed your choices, [schedule campus visits](#). Try to visit in the spring of your junior year while colleges are still in session.

For more tips, see the [Finding the Right Fit section](#) at EducationQuest.org.

This app will help you stay on track to college

Download the EducationQuest app for easy access to tools like *Activities Resume*, *College Profiles*, *College Timeline*, *Reality Check*, and *ScholarshipQuest*. There's also a calendar that will guide you through college-planning steps - and you can personalize it with your own tasks.

Download the app and encourage your friends to do the same!

[Apple](#) [Android](#)

November "To Do" List

Seniors...complete these tasks in November to stay on the path to college:

- ☐ Complete the [FAFSA](#).
- ☐ Apply to your top college choices.
- ☐ Download the [EducationQuest app](#).
- ☐ [Register](#) by November 8 for the December 7 SAT.
- ☐ [Register](#) by November 8 for the December 14 ACT.

Juniors...complete these tasks:

- ☐ Research colleges that interest you.
 - ☐ Take a prep course for the ACT college entrance exam.
 - ☐ Download the [EducationQuest app](#).
-

For free help with college planning, contact EducationQuest Foundation:

Omaha	Lincoln	Kearney	Scottsbluff
402-391-4033	402-475-5222	308-234-6310	800-303-3745 ext. 6654
888-357-6300	800-303-3745	800-666-3721	

EducationQuest.org

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for a chance to win a [\\$500 scholarship!](#)

Your Journey to College Begins with Us



Share the wonders of science with your elementary schooler

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to teach your child about science. Just do some simple things like these:

- **Encourage your child** to collect and organize objects, such as leaves, rocks, shells or bottle caps.
- **Encourage investigation.** Give your child a magnifying glass. Ask him, "What things do you see?" "What's similar and what's different?"
- **Talk about the science** that happens in your home. For instance, which cereals get soggy? Why do foods in the refrigerator get moldy? Why do some plants need more water than others?
- **Show an interest** in science. Look at the moon and the stars with your child. Weigh snow. Mix paints.
- **Include your child**—as an observer or, better yet, a helper—when you make household repairs or work on the family car.
- **Nurture curiosity.** Ask your child questions. "Why do you think ...?" "What might happen if ...?" and "How can we find out ...?"
- **Go to the library.** Check out books on different scientific topics.
- **Give your child something** to take apart—a ball point pen, a candle, an old toy. Encourage him to figure out how it works.
- **Talk about the weather.** Have your child record the temperature each day for a month. Note whether the day was sunny, cloudy or rainy. Which was the hottest day? How many rainy days were there?

Family meals are linked to school success



Busy schedules can make it hard to find the time for family meals. However, studies show that

kids who eat meals regularly with their families tend to earn better grades. They are more likely to talk with parents and are less likely to use drugs and alcohol.

This school year, strive to eat dinner as a family at least once a week. To get the most out of family meals:

- **Ask your child to help.** Get her involved in planning and preparing the meal.
- **Turn off the TV** and keep mobile phones and tablets off the table.
- **Talk about everyone's day.** Ask each family member to share something that happened that day.
- **Keep the conversation** positive. Don't use this time to lecture your child about something. Make family meals and dinnertime conversations something everyone in the family looks forward to!

Source: A. Fishel, Ph.D., "The Importance of Eating Together," The Family Dinner Project, nswc.com/elem-familydinner.

November is a great month to teach and learn with your child



Education doesn't just happen at school—it happens everywhere! And November is a month full of learning opportunities:

- **Nov. 4**—King Tut Day. With your child, check out a book or go online to learn more about the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb.
- **Nov. 8**—Election Day. Talk to your child about rights, responsibilities and why it is important to vote.
- **Nov. 13-19**—American Education Week. Try to visit your child's school one day this week to show your support for education.
- **Nov. 16**—International Day of Tolerance. Talk with your child about the importance of being

respectful to people who have beliefs that are different from yours.

- **Nov. 20-26**—National Family Week. Spend extra time as a family this week. Play games, cook meals and read together!
- **Nov. 24**—American Thanksgiving. Have family members make a list of all the people and things they are thankful for.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you."

—B.B. King

Brainstorming is the solution for your child's writer's block!



Some kids don't like to write because they think it's boring. Others find it too challenging. They get frustrated trying

to think of ideas.

You can't force a child to *love* writing. But you can turn a reluctant writer around with brainstorming.

Brainstorming is fun and boosts creativity. It reduces stress and can help your child break through writer's block.

Brainstorming also teaches other skills that help with writing. By creating lists, for example, your child learns to break down complex ideas into smaller components. She can use brainstorming to figure out a topic for a paper or to think of ideas for a short story.

The next time your child can't think of what to write about, have her:

- **Make lists.** Here are a few topics to help her get started: *Things I love. My favorite animals, places, toys or food. Things I know a lot about. Scary characters. Things adults say.*
- **Exaggerate.** Ask your child some questions that will spark new ways to think about people, events and scenes. "What would it feel like to be a car, a house or a dog? What would life be like if you had four hands?"
- **Use visual images.** Have your child look at a picture and write down what it brings to mind. Or she can take a walk and make notes about what she sees.
- **Think about actions** she could add to her ideas: What will happen next? How quickly?

Source: D.B. Reeves, Ph.D., *Reason to Write: Help Your Child in School and in Life Through Better Reasoning and Clear Communication—Elementary School Edition*, Kaplan Publishing.

Are you making read-aloud time the best it can be?



Time spent reading aloud is critical to helping children become better readers. It's also fun! Are you making the

most of your read-aloud time? Answer *yes* or *no* to each of the questions below to find out:

- ___ **1. Do you have a regular read-aloud time with your child that lasts at least 20 minutes each day?**
- ___ **2. Do you let your child take a turn reading aloud to you?**
- ___ **3. Do you make read-aloud time fun for your whole family by taking turns picking books you want to read together?**
- ___ **4. Do you stop reading at an exciting place so your child will want to read again the next day?**
- ___ **5. Do you sometimes stop to talk about what you've just read or to make predictions about what's about to happen?**

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean you're making the most of the time you spend reading aloud with your child. For each *no* answer, try that idea in the quiz.

Elementary School
Parents
make the difference!

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Downtime is vital for your child's health and academic success



Some parents schedule every minute of their children's time in an effort to prepare them for success in later life.

But studies suggest that kids benefit from enjoying unscheduled free time.

When days are packed with lessons, sports and other structured activities, children can become overwhelmed and stressed out. As a result, they don't do as well in school and are more likely to get sick.

To determine if your child's schedule is balanced, ask yourself:

- **Does my child** have time to play with friends? Practices that are planned and run by adults don't count. Kids need time to relax and just "hang out" with other children.
- **When does my child** do homework? Does she work on it while traveling

from one activity to the next?

Schoolwork takes concentration, and that takes time.

- **Why is my child** in these activities? Sometimes, parents are the ones who want their child to take a class or participate in a sport.
- **Does my child** get enough sleep? Children between the ages of six and 12 need nine to 12 hours of sleep each day. Without that sleep, their brains don't function as well.

School is your child's most important job. If too many activities are getting in the way, ask your child to choose only one or two she truly enjoys. She'll be happier and healthier—and she'll do better in school.

Source: C. Hennig, "The Lost Art of Play: How Overscheduling Makes Children Anxious," CBC News, niscw.com/elem-downtime.

Three simple strategies can boost reading comprehension



As your child gets older, he will be expected to read and understand more complex text.

He will transition from

learning to read to *reading to learn*.

To support this transition, share these reading comprehension strategies with your child:

1. **See the big picture.** Before he starts to read an assignment, have your child think about what he will be reading. What is the title of the chapter or assignment? Does it offer any clues about the content? Suggest he look for other clues, such as subheadings, words in boldface or italics, pictures or graphs.
2. **Take notes.** Taking notes while reading will make it easier for your child to comprehend and remember information. It will also make reading active and engaging. Your child should write down the most important ideas in the reading assignment. He should also write down any words he doesn't know so he can look them up later.
3. **Make connections.** The best way to remember new information is to relate it to something already learned. When your child finishes reading, have him answer questions such as: How is this topic similar to something else I know? What key ideas did I already know? What new information did I learn?

Q: My son gets average grades, but I know he could do better. Some parents pay their children for good grades. Is this something I should consider?

Questions & Answers

A: Parents want their children to do their best in school—and they are constantly looking for effective ways to motivate their kids to achieve. But there are serious drawbacks to offering money for grades.

Paying for grades:

- **Doesn't allow your child** to enjoy the satisfaction of learning. Kids don't need bribes to *want* to learn. They are natural learners. As they master new skills or memorize new facts, they gain self-esteem and self-confidence. However, when you pay your child for grades, you actually run the risk of *decreasing* your child's self-confidence.
- **Doesn't recognize effort.** Your child should focus on doing his best. If he's tried his hardest and he's learning, neither he nor you should worry too much about grades. If he's trying but still struggling with the material, talk to the teacher.
- **Decreases motivation.** Kids who get paid for doing some things may expect to get paid for doing everything. Pretty soon, your child will have his hand out every time you want him to do something, from mowing the grass to taking out the trash to feeding the dog.

So what can you do to get your child's grades up? Help him focus on what he is learning. Help him keep track of his new skills. And praise him for working hard and doing his best!

It Matters: Homework

Understand the hidden value of homework



Homework gives your child an opportunity to practice the skills he is learning in school. But did you know that

homework also teaches him valuable life lessons?

When your child completes homework on his own, he learns skills such as:

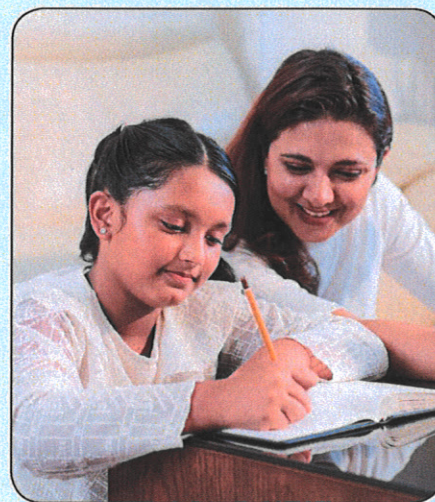
- **Organization.** Keeping track of due dates and assignments will help your child learn the value of being organized. Show him how to use organizational tools, such as a daily planner, folders and binders.
- **Responsibility.** Your child learns the importance of fulfilling his obligations. He also learns that he is accountable for his mistakes and his successes.
- **Initiative.** Due dates can help your child learn how to be self-motivated. When he chooses to start working on his social studies project as soon as it is assigned, he is showing initiative.
- **Perseverance.** Most parents want to protect their children from frustration. However, making your child's life easier now may make it harder in the future. Sticking with a tough assignment and refusing to give up helps your child gain confidence and develop perseverance.
- **Time management.** Breaking down large tasks and prioritizing responsibilities in order to complete homework on time helps your child learn how to manage his time effectively.

Give your elementary schooler the right kind of support

Homework is a vital link between home and school. Teachers assign homework to help students understand and review classwork. When parents are involved in homework, they find out what students are learning.

But being involved does not mean doing your child's homework *for* her. Instead, you should:

- **Make sure your child understands** the assignments. Look over the instructions together. Then have her explain the assignment to you in her own words. Ask questions to check her understanding.
- **Review homework every day.** Even if you're not present when your child does her homework, always ask to see it. Your interest sends the message that homework is important.
- **Encourage your child to take a break** if you notice she's struggling.



Then, try to help her with what is frustrating her.

- **Stay in touch** with the teacher. Be sure to let her teacher know if your child struggles with homework every day. Ask what you can do at home to help your child.
- **Remain positive.** Your attitude will affect your child.

A math strategy wheel can help your child get back on track



When your child gets stuck on a math problem, she might not remember how to get herself back on track.

That's where a strategy wheel can help. To make one, ask your child to list all the different things she can do to find the answer to a math problem, such as:

- **Reread the problem.**
- **Draw a diagram.**
- **Restate the problem in my own words.**

- **Guess an answer** and then check it out.
- **Think about how I solved** other problems like this one.

Then, have your child create a pie chart with each of her strategies listed. Post the chart where she does her math homework.

The next time your child is stuck, all she needs to do is glance at the wheel and then try one or more of the strategies.

Source: D. Ronis, *Brain-Compatible Mathematics*, Skyhorse Publishing.

BUILDING READERS®

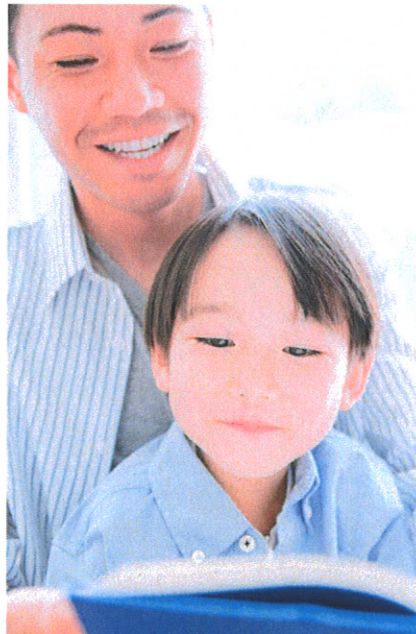
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Hay Springs Public Schools

Spice up your ordinary reading routines

Reading with your child every day is one of the most important things you can do to help him succeed in school. To build your child's excitement about reading:

- **Find new reading spots.** Pick fun, unusual places to read. Build a fort with blankets and couch cushions. Or, bundle up and read outside.
- **Read as a team.** Have your child follow words with his finger while you read. Or, take turns reading pages to each other.
- **Plan a performance.** Choose a favorite passage to recite and help your child master it. Gather an audience to admire his skills.
- **Celebrate reading success.** When he reaches a goal (such as 100 reading minutes in a week), do something special!



"Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light."

—Vera Nazarian

Three ways to maintain your child's enthusiasm for reading

Even a child who loves reading can lose interest over time. Other hobbies can take up time that she once spent on reading. To keep your child's passion for reading alive:

1. **Use her current interests** as a springboard. You might offer your child a biography of her favorite athlete or singer.
2. **Respect her growing maturity.** Share interesting books or articles with your child. You might say, "I just read a great story online. I thought you might want to read it."
3. **Show you value her opinions.** Does your child like the book she is reading for English class? What does she think of the main character in the novel she is reading?

Create homemade greeting cards

Making greeting cards is a creative activity that involves reading and writing. With your child, make a list of birthdays, holidays and other events. Have her create a special card for each. She can decorate the front of a folded sheet of paper and write a short message inside.

Encourage her to read cards she sees in stores to get ideas about what to write.



Children need fluency role models

Did you know that just by reading to your child, you are building his fluency? When you set an example by reading smoothly—with emotion and enthusiasm—you show that good reading is similar to talking. It flows with ease.

You might also enjoy listening to audiobooks together and attending library story times.



Serve the community by reading aloud to others

Does your child enjoy reading aloud? If so, she can brighten other people's days by reading to them.

Together, research places where you and your child can volunteer to read to others. Look into local day care centers, nursing homes and hospitals. Not only will your child nurture her own love of reading, she'll also be sharing it with others.



Follow A-R-C when reading textbooks

Reading a textbook is a lot different from reading a novel. Yet students don't always have the skills they need to get the most from their textbooks. Go over the A-R-C method—Associate, Read, Connect—with your child. Encourage him to:

- **Associate.** Before reading, help him think about what he already knows about the subject. He should skim the chapter and look at the pictures, headings and words in bold type. Your child can also write down questions he expects to answer as he reads.
- **Read.** Your child should read one section, then stop. Does he understand what he just read? If not, he should reread it.
- **Connect.** Have your child go back and answer the questions he brainstormed at the beginning of the chapter. He can also answer the questions at the end of the chapter.



Practice using synonyms and antonyms with the whole family

Here's a way to work on *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with the opposite meaning) with your child during family time. Divide two pieces of paper into three columns. Then:

1. **In the first column,** describe yourselves in positive terms. For example, "I am ... kind, generous."
2. **In the second column,** write a synonym for each word. ("I am ... nice, giving.")
3. **In the third column,** write an antonym for each word. ("I am not ... mean, stingy.")
4. **Exchange pages.** Read about each other. Then play the game again—this time describing the other person.



Use the dictionary to boost vocabulary

Open a dictionary to any page. Have your child point to a place on the page without looking. Then, try to define the word closest to where your child pointed. Take turns being the pointer and guesser. A correct definition equals one point. See who can get to 15 points first.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Luke on the Loose*** by Harry Bliss. What's it like to be a pigeon in New York? Luke finds out when he chases a flock in this comic-book adventure.
- ***Chloe and the Lion*** by Mac Barnett. When Chloe gets lost in the woods, an argument breaks out between this book's author and illustrator, who have different views of how the story should end.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***Adventures in Cartooning*** by James Sturm, Andrew Arnold and Alexis-Frederick Frost. This humorous story is told in comic-book style—all while explaining how kids can create comics themselves.
- ***The New Kid*** by Mavis Jukes. Carson is moving from a small school where he knows everyone to a new town and a new school. Join him for all of the adventures he has in store!



Q: I gave my child a journal, but he doesn't want to use it. How can I encourage him to write in it?

A: Journals are great for building reading and writing skills, but some kids don't want to write about their daily activities and feelings. They may respond, however, to prompts. Suggest that your child start entries with fun things like, "If I could design a school, I would ..." or "If I could have one superpower it would be ..."

Building Readers[®]

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