

Community Connections

FEBRUARY 2022



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

BRAD WOMACK

As we kick off 2022, one of my goals is to increase transparency of the district and find better ways to engage with our parents, students and school community. This newsletter will serve as one way we will continue to share all the great things happening within Silver Lake Schools.

There are a lot of really exciting things on the horizon for our schools as well as our community, and those things don't happen without the support, time and resources of individuals like you. We thank you for all you do for our students, staff and community.

SILVER LAKE SCHOOLS
NEWSLETTER

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Student Highlights

DANI FARRIS WINS SCHOLASTIC GOLD KEY

Silver Lake High School art student, Dani Farris, has been awarded a gold key from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Her ceramic piece, "Cat", was judged on three criteria including, originality, technical skill and emergence of a personal voice or vision.

Dani's piece will travel to Wichita as part of a six-week exhibition, before moving onto the national judging. The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards is considered one of the longest-running and most prestigious recognition programs for creative teens.

"Dani is an incredibly hard-working artist. She continually sets goals to better herself and her skills, which is a trait I am amazed and inspired by," said Michaela Conley, Silver Lake High School art teacher. "She brings a positive attitude to class every day and sets an example of good work ethic for her peers. I'm very excited for Dani and hope that this recognition helps fuel her to continue her creating and sharing love for art. I also hope that this award will help inspire other Silver Lake art students to share their art because we have so many talented students."



Dani Farris (above) will have her ceramic piece "Cat" on exhibit in Wichita for six weeks before heading to the national competition.

Important March Dates

4	No Preschool
14	Spring Break Begins
23	8th Grade Parent Meeting 5:30 p.m.
23	6th Grade Parent Meeting 6:30 p.m.

NAVY VETERAN TURNS ART TEACHER

What do an art teacher, a pastry chef and a Navy veteran have in common? Mrs. Michaela Conley has all three of these on her resume! Mrs. Conley joined the Silver Lake family this year as the high school art teacher. She is a first-year teacher with a very unique background.

Brewster Washington is home, but Mrs. Conley, now lives in Meriden as she transitions to her new role. She attended both the Art Institute of California and Washburn University. She is married and has three children. When not at work, she enjoys hiking, running, camping and watching movies.

When asked what she was most looking forward to this year, Mrs. Conley said, "Getting to know the Silver Lake community."

To keep up with all the happenings in the art program this year, like their Facebook page at Silver Lake High School Art. Help us welcome Mrs. Conley to Silver Lake!



MEET MRS. CAMPBELL

Welcome to one of our newest teachers to join the Silver Lake family, Mrs. Jessie Campbell. Mrs. Campbell, 2nd grade teacher, is originally from Pleasant Hill, California, and attended York University for her undergraduate degree followed by Fort Hays State for her graduate degree. Prior to joining Silver Lake she spent seven years teaching 5th grade at Mission Valley.

When not at work, she loves spending time with her husband and two children doing things like going to the zoo, playing board games, having movie nights and taking road trips. Mrs. Campbell also enjoys crafting and reading books and scripture on her front porch. She loves history, specifically American history.

Fun Fact: Her mom is from Topeka where her grandparents were teachers. Mrs. Campbell has lived in California her entire life so to end up teaching in Kansas right where her mom is from, was a turn she wasn't expecting!



"I am looking forward to getting to know students and the Silver Lake community. I love making connections and building new relationships."

EAGLE'S NEST PROGRAM ENCOURAGES POSITIVE STUDENT INTERACTIONS

A new program was formed at the high school this school year called Eagle's Nest. This club is designed to provide positive connections for students in our district, with the overall goal to have all students to feel welcome and supported in the school.

When the club started a variety of students were targeted to represent all backgrounds. We want to make the culture of Silver Lake schools inclusive and safe. Students in our group have people to say hi to them in the hall, invite them to eat lunch with them and generally be nice to them.

We provide structured activities designed to open and encourage communication between students of all backgrounds. We have found it to be beneficial for all students in our group. Some of the structured activities for this year include pizza and Uno, pumpkin painting, games in the gym, pumpkin bread making, Christmas party and planting flowers in the greenhouse.

COME WORK FOR US

Do you enjoy working with kids? This is your chance to join the USD 372 family. We are currently hiring for several positions including:

- bus drivers
- substitute para-professionals
- substitute teachers
- substitute custodian

To learn more about these openings or about working for Silver Lake schools, visit us online at www.silverlakeschools.org

We are also in need of volunteers at certain school events, specifically ticket takers and concession workers. Contact the high school office if interested.

DISTRICT HEALTH UPDATE

It is no secret that the past couple of years have been challenging on many fronts, but one of the most noticeable being on our district nursing staff. Our district nurses, Ann Rupp and Amanda Hay continue to navigate the ever-changing world of Covid within our district and community.

Each week they release new Covid numbers for students and staff in the district. Those updated numbers can be found on the district website on the "health services" page.

While keeping up with all things Covid, they have also maintained all the regular responsibilities they have across the district including assisting students with their health needs such as medication dosing, illness and injuries.

DEBATE TAKES SECOND PLACE AT STATE



FOUNDATION BREAKFAST COMING UP

Mark your calendars for the annual Silver Lake School Foundation Breakfast, Monday, February 21. This fundraiser titled "Education for the Game of Life" will feature keynote speaker, Carol Perry, MSM, BSN, RN, FACHE – Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Acute Care Operations for Stormont-Vail HealthCare.

The event will kick off with a coffee social at 7:30 a.m. and breakfast to follow at 8:00 a.m. to be held in the high school gym.

To reserve a seat, or sponsor one for a district educator, you can visit the Foundation's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/silverlakepublicfoundation

Congratulations to our district debate team who took second place at the state debate tournament in 4-person debate. Students competed over a two-day period against schools from all over the state.

This year nine Silver Lake students qualified for state, including four first year debaters. We had six students on our 4-speaker team Olivia Day, Brooklyn Langley, Elizabeth Jordan, Drake Sexton, Allie Sexton, and Meredith Burgess. Olivia Ray and Tessa Gerber competed at the 2-speaker division. Sarah Smith qualified but was unable to attend.

Michelle Taylor, Silver Lake debate coach shared, "We return six of our state qualifiers next year so we look forward to continuing to build on our success. In terms of running the tournament, we could not have done it without all of the administrators, teachers, custodians, and community members who stepped up in so many ways. This allowed for us to have a successful weekend competitively."

DISTRICT RECEIVES ESSER DOLLARS

There have been three releases of funds to schools through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds for K-12 schools. These ESSER grants will provide school districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact COVID-19 has had on elementary and secondary schools.

Our ESSER I allocation was \$26,596. This allocation came during the initial onset of the pandemic, and 100 percent of those funds went to cover the salary expense for employees who were required by law to be paid even though they were not working. The dollars were also used to cover substitute teacher expenses when teachers were absent due to COVID.

Our ESSER II money came to us as a Direct Allocation and a True-Up allocation. The total amount we received from ESSER II was \$202,623. The following is how we allocated those funds:

- Technology-Hardware (Students) - \$92,395
- Technology-Software (Students) - \$21,277
- Technology-Hardware (Teacher/Admin) - \$16,790
- HVAC update (Ionizers & Filters) - \$35,761
- Nursing & Wellness - \$4,846
- Outdoor Learning Environment (Elementary) - \$10,840
- Transportation (Additional Bus Route) - \$7,550
- Custodial/Maintenance - \$8,899
- Additional Student Programs - \$2,075
- Library (Signage Equipment) - \$990
- Professional Development (Staff) - \$1,200

Our ESSER III money came to us as a Direct Allocation and a True-Up allocation. The total amount we received from ESSER III was \$422,124. The state board of education has not approved our plan, and since we have three years to expend all of the funds, we have not yet allocated 100% of our dollars. This list shows how we propose to distribute these funds:

- Furniture for outdoor learning - \$2,820
- Summer Enrichment - \$6,000
- Learning Loss -
 - Interventionist, tutors, software - \$100,000
 - Before/After School - \$5,000
 - Academic Surveys/Assessments - \$29,000
- Full-time Social Worker - \$60,000
- Mental Health Screeners/Surveys - \$34,000
- Work-based Learning/Internships - \$8,000
- After School Program - \$25,000
- ACT Prep Course - \$3,000
- Computer Science Expansion - \$10,000
- Employee Incentive Pay - \$65,500
- Professional Development - Employees - \$16,000
- Self-Care Opportunities (Students and Staff) - \$10,000

RENOVATIONS PLANNED FOR FACILITIES

During the 2008-2009 school year, the district opened a new facilities to house the pre-school and the kindergarten students in the main elementary building. After the students had been moved to the new classrooms, the plan was to move the administrative offices to the “West Building,” but various rounds of state-level budget cuts halted the progress on those plans. Now in 2022, we are finally ready to move forward.

Once renovated, the “West Building” will be named the Paul H. Snavelly Education Center and house the district offices, a board meeting room, special services offices, transportation office and a staff training room. The renovation process should begin in late April to early May and be completed by December of 2022.

As the school board continues to have conversations about the future programs for our students and begins to develop our next set of long-range goals for the district, it is evident that available space will be a hurdle. The board has decided that now is the time to renovate the Paul H. Snavelly Education Center to allow for the needed curricular progress to begin soon and to better assess the district's facility needs in the coming years.

The elementary school will need to have space to meet the needs of the increased demand on our preschool program, adding an art program and space for our special services to meet the individual needs of our students confidentially. The high school will need to renovate the family and consumer science room, create an actual middle school art room, space for the expansion of computer science, update our science labs, weight room and some of the athletic facilities.

The board continues to make small but meaningful improvements every year to better position the district to meet the goal of being the best school district in the state of Kansas on every metric used to evaluate schools. Silver Lake has a long history of excellence and is committed to not only maintaining that level but moving the bar even higher for ourselves and future generations.



This blueprint (left) shows the current plans for the "West Building" as the district embarks on transforming the space.

HTK Architects is working with district leadership and the board of education to develop plans that will best serve the needs of students and staff, as they work towards the future goals of the district.

We will continue to provide progress reports as developments occur.

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION TAKING OFF

The opportunities for high school students to engage in career and technical education are growing. The district has three pathways in place with several class options that students have the chance to take, which will help them not only gain skills developing a product, but learn how to run a business.

The three current pathways in place, and the courses that connect to them include:

Agriculture: plant and animal science (includes the greenhouse) and welding

Journalism: video, web and photography

Business: marketing and banking

Additional classes that will be added to the pathways program include sign making and the t-shirt shop. In addition, we are currently working on a new construction pathway that will engage our woodworking program.

As we continue to build and develop this program the ultimate goal will be the juniors and seniors will produce a product within their pathway and work among student in other pathways to create a business to include marketing and banking. Ultimately, we would love to be able to see students create online sales where the community and public could order their product online and students would produce to fill orders.

We are also working to build our sign and t-shirt programs into the current pathways.

The district recently added a plasma cutter to our metals program. In January students and staff were training on this machine and we are truly excited to see what will come with this.

DISTRICT LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

While we continue to look at ways we can improve our district we want to increase communication and make things easier for parents, students, staff and our community to find information about our district.

We recently launched a new look to our website and will be working over the coming weeks to clean up information and look at how we can enhance navigation to better serve you.

Please be patient with us as we work through these changes. To stay up with all the district happens, visit us online at www.silverlakeschools.org, like us on Facebook at Silver Lake Schools, USD 372 or follow us on Twitter at @SilverLakeEagles

UPCOMING COMMUNITY DATES

Looking for things to do or be involved with around the community? We have compiled a few things that you might be interested in!

The Silver Lake Ball Association registration is open. You can get all the information on their Facebook page or online at www.silverlakeball.com

Silver Lake - Lake Days is currently working on the 2nd annual Lake Days celebration. Save the date for June 10-11, 2022. You can help with the planning by joining their next meeting February 23 at 6 p.m at the SL Library. Keep up to date on their Facebook page at Silver Lake -Lake Days