

District News

February 2018



Ewert named Read Across America winner

As a seasoned kindergarten teacher, Renee Ewert embraces the joy of taking her students on an adventure through the pages of a story. Dozens of books line the shelves in her cheery classroom and a cozy reading chair stands ready to host storytellers. So it's no surprise Ewert was excited at the prospect of winning 50 books for Andale Elementary's library when she entered the Read Across America contest. The real surprise came when she learned last month from KNEA Vice President Sherri Schwanz that she'd won.

Schwanz will visit Andale Elementary on March 2 to read to students and present the library with the 50 books. While the event will be just a day, the story of the impact those books will have will have no end.

"Those books will be a great asset to our school's library," Ewert said. "Our students at Andale Elementary Middle School are readers and they love to be introduced to new authors and their books. As a teacher of Kindergarten students who has had the privilege of teaching at AEMS for many years, I enjoy giving my current and former students the opportunity to read and enjoy new books."

While Ewert isn't hoping for any particular titles, books in the accelerated reader ranges of pre-reading and early reading levels are always welcome.

"These benefit our early readers because it helps them build a love of reading that will last a lifetime."

KASB: BOE members' service a notable contribution

The job of a school board member is challenging, the hours are long and the thanks can sometimes be few and far between.

January 2018 was designated as "School Board Recognition Month," by Kansas Associations of School Boards, and the organization encourages patrons to take the time to express appreciation individuals who serve.

Those serving students, parents, staff and patrons of USD 267 are President Greg

Tice, District 2; Vice-President Joanna Fair, District 1; Bill Brand, district 1; Joe Camp, at-large; Brent Dome, District 2; Chris Heimerman, District 3; and newly-elected member Craig Nelson, District 3. Members serve a four-year term and are eligible for re-election.

Renwick Board of Education meets the second Monday each month and the public is welcome.

Minutes and agendas for meetings are available to view online at usd267.com.



USD 267 board members are: (front, left to right): Chris Heimerman, Vice President Joanna Fair, President Greg Tice, and Craig Nelson. Back row (left to right): Joe Camp, Brent Dome and Bill Brand.

CES Library grant to focus on hands-on learning

A recent grant to Colwich Elementary Library will provide some hands-on learning for students as they begin the new calendar year.

CES Library received a \$400 STEAM Kit grant sponsored by the South Central Kansas Library System. Renwick Librarian Diane Simon wrote the grant and looks forward to the learning opportunities the kit will provide to students. "Included in our kit are several items useful for the STEAM movement," Simon said, noting CES Library received two 3Doodler starter kits, which allow the user to create 3D designs, and also received an OSMO starter kit.

Osmo is a technology system that bridges the physical and digital worlds by taking gameplay beyond the screen. It works with an iPad so that the user can create with their manipulatives and see it on the screen of the iPad.

"There are several books that re provide activities and projects for students to reinforce the STEAM concept," Simon said. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, English Language ARTS, and Math. "These tools help students to understand these areas of the curriculum through the use hands-on activities and manipulatives."

Ten grant applicants were awarded the kits.

"We are excited to try out all of these new tools."



Colwich Elementary School received \$400 STEAM kit grant sponsored by South Central Kansas Library System. The kit provides activities and tools to reinforce learning through hands-on activities and manipulatives.

Recent grant funds to focus on health habits for GPHS, AES

Recognizing that school is where children spend most of their daily lives – making it an ideal place to encourage healthy habits – the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation sent \$148,757.65 in Healthy Habits for Life grants to schools in 65 Kansas counties. The 154 separate grants will help school nurses, teachers and administrators fund programs or activities in 2018 aimed at helping thousands of children reduce their cardiovascular risk, increase their physical activity or learn healthy eating habits. Garden Plain High School and Andale Elementary School were both grant recipients.

"Healthy Habits for Life was the first major grant program developed by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation and, 12 years later, it still fills an existing need in helping curb childhood

obesity rates in Kansas," said Marlou Wegener, chief operating officer of the BCBSKS Foundation. "The Foundation's board of directors remains committed to funding at-school health programs a teacher or staff member might not otherwise be able to deliver due to tight budgets."

Sue Mountain, GPHS nurse said the \$1,000 awarded to the school will be used to purchase a set of kettle ball weights with a storage shelf for the Physical Education department.

"The addition of this equipment for the Physical Education Department will help students to burn calories while at the same time will help to develop power in the hamstrings, glues and core," Mountain said. "A workout using kettle balls can help to get a person in shape faster than any other exercises."

Andale Elementary nurse Abby Ungles plans to use the funding awarded to put together a health lesson for middle school students that she hopes will evolve into a health fair.

"I plan to purchase a Healthometer Ht/Wt/BMI scale so I can measure and record results annually," Ungles said. "I will also be purchasing an automatic blood pressure cuff so that I can teach my middle school students how to use it and how to record blood pressure and heart rate and to know their target numbers for their age group."

The lessons learned now will empower the students for a lifetime.

"I want to educate them on heart health including healthy eating, weight, and lifestyle so that they can carry this information with them into their adulthood," Ungles said.

Gubernatorial candidate visits GPHS

It's not every day high school students have the opportunity to get up close and personal with a gubernatorial candidate.

That's exactly why Garden Plain High School senior Brooke Foster chose to invite gubernatorial candidate Ethan Randleas to speak in an open forum with her fellow students as part of her senior project.

"I really wanted to get the students at GPHS involved in politics," she said. "With it being my senior year, I will be able to vote in the 2018 election, so I thought it would be perfect to bring someone in to teach these kids about politics and to really get to know someone that they may vote for."

Gina Clark, career education instructor at GPHS, said the forum was a small step in the continuing journey to involve students in the political system.

"Many times we count out our youth population because we think they are under involved or not concerned with the issues in politics and the effect it will have on them," she said. "But really, we need to find ways to get them involved and give them the experiences they need to make decisions on candidates."

Foster is the exception when it comes to political interest among her peers. The soon-to-be voter said it's the element of change that continues to draw her in.

"The first popular debates were the Lincoln-Douglas debates when Abraham Lincoln was running for a U.S. Senate seat from Illinois in 1858. The seven debates were spread out among towns in Illinois and lasted for hours on end," Foster said. "The only people that were local or area residents were able to come see it."

Foster contrasts this with the 2016 Presidential debates, which boasted 71.43 million viewers.

"Conversation topics have also greatly changed," she said. "I think that by seeing those political changes, it becomes very exciting."

While it's too early to tell if Randleas snagged any voters from the visit, both Clark and Foster were pleased with the impact.

"He knew so much and while the kids were able to debate with him a bit, they also learned about what motivates someone to run for office," Foster said, noting the interaction also helped the students realize they have a voice. "Students and teachers alike enjoyed the chance to tell someone what they



Brooke Foster has a passion for political science. So it was only natural the Garden Plain High School senior chose to bring gubernatorial candidate Ethan Randleas to address fellow students during an open forum.

Superintendent's Corner

I hope your 2018 is off to a great start. Our year is certainly moving quickly, as Parent/Teacher Conferences for the second semester are already upon us.

I am excited to hear how conferences go this week. The staff and principals have worked really hard to try and bring important information to each parent regarding their students. Our hope is that we will continue to grow our communication and partnership in the education of each child. I believe students, parents and staff will find our Career Cruising program very helpful in the individual plan of study process.

I want to officially congratulate Andale Elementary Principal Tad Hatfield for being chosen District 4 Elementary Principal of the year. Hatfield has served AES students, staff and parents for the past

seven years. I am proud of the efforts and accomplishments of Mr. Hatfield and his staff, and wish him luck as he is a finalist for the Kansas Principal of the Year.

As you are probably aware I have made the decision to resign my position in Renwick. I am excited about the possibilities, and yet it is hard to leave someplace you truly care deeply about. The BOE will have a new person hired in the next few weeks, and I know that they will bring someone in that will do an exceptional job. I also believe they will love this district as much as I do. We are a united school district, and when we work together for our students amazing things happen.



John Dandurand GPHS Graduate



John Dandurand works for Textron Aviation in Wichita, where he has had several roles in Human Resources and Operations. I currently hold the position of Human Resources Business Leader, where I have HR responsibility for Customer Service employees located in the US and rest of world. I also lead the Labor Relations function (this group is responsible for administering our relationship with the Union and employees covered under the bargaining unit) for Textron Aviation. Prior to current role was Director of Assembly Operations having responsibility for assembly of Cessna business jets produced in Wichita. Also earlier in career transferred to Bell Helicopter (Textron company) in Amarillo Texas, where I was Human Resource Director for their military assembly center.

What degree(s) have you received since your graduation from Renwick and what schools did you attend?

Masters in Management from Friends University.

What do you enjoy the most about your chosen profession?

On a personal level – it’s all about the people. Every job I have had comes back to working with others. I have met a lot of great people along the way and have learned something from each one.

On a professional level – It’s been about the variety. I have had the opportunity to move within a profession and even had the opportunity to change professions, moving between Human Resources and Operations. Being able to change roles keeps me challenged and requires continued learning.

Was there a teacher who made a positive impact you or helped direct your path when

you were a Renwick student? How did they inspire you?

It took each of them, let’s just say at times I was easily distracted. I would especially thank Bill Brown, Nancy Bollinger, Charlotte Ediger, Marita Hill, Mary Meyer, Duane Puetz, and Loren Schomacker. In their own way, each provided guidance, support, direction and correction when it was needed. But in the end, there can only be one, and for me that’s easy. It was my mother, Martha Dandurand. She deserves a medal for finding a way to be both a mother and teacher. She loved learning and that was contagious. Without that, I am certain my education and career would have turned out quite differently. Thanks, Mom.

Advice to current Renwick students preparing for college?

The education available to Renwick students provides a great foundation for whatever they choose to do after graduation. The key is applying yourself, when it comes to education I am convinced you will get out of it only as much as you put into it. Everything you need to be successful is there to be had, if you’re willing to put in the effort.

What kind of a difference did your time as a student at Renwick make for you?

Intersession part of continuing work on Gemini at GPHS

At Garden Plain High School, faculty piloted intersession classes on a variety of topics that students do not typically get to learn such as cooking and etiquette, lacrosse, fishing and others.

“Our goal is to see if logistically this is something we’d like to do on an on-going basis while at the same time offer unique opportunities for students,” said Principal Kati Thul.

“Staff have planned two trips to visit other schools in this semester with the goal of increasing our career and technical education pathways offered, as well as to investigate the project-based learning environment in a high school setting. With the overall goal of redesigning the education model, we are looking at schedule options as well as changing the classes we offer to better fit the student’s needs.”

GPHS and Colwich Elementary are two of the schools selected to participate in the Gemini endeavor as part of the Kansas CAN Redesign schools project.

