



# District News

September 2017

## Trailblazers: Renwick schools part of Gemini

Schools tasked with preparing students for life in the 21st Century can find blazing a trail to the future on well-worn paths quite challenging.

The Kansas State Department of Education launched the Kansas Can School Redesign Project to assist districts in rethinking education in their schools. Kansas school districts interested in being part of the innovative project were asked to apply. Seven districts were chosen to be part of the Mercury part of the project, while 21 were selected to as members of the Gemini stage of the project.

Renwick accepted the challenge of becoming a Gemini participant, and selected Colwich Elementary and Garden Plain High as the schools to participate.

“Renwick District staff and students prove every year that we are an educational community that strives to lead, not follow,” said

Superintendent Tracy Bourne. “Gemini project is another opportunity for our educational community to be on the forefront of change and innovation.”

Districts in the Gemini project will participate in video Professional Learning Community sessions together; set a project launch date that occurs no later than the spring of 2020; engage in opportunities to collaborate with other Gemini and Mercury schools; develop and share a project timeline with KSDE staff members; redesign one elementary and one secondary school; and adhere to the redesign fundamental principles.

“Being a part of the Gemini project means that we will have an opportunity to change the structure of our school as we never have before,” said Kati Thul, Garden Plain High School principal. “It is an exciting time in the field of education because

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Garden Plain High and Colwich Elementary schools will participate in the Kansas Can School Redesign Project as members of the Gemini phase of the initiative. The Kansas State Department of Education launched the redesign project to support districts as they tailor fresh approaches to education in their schools.

## Superintendent's Corner: Year off to solid start

I am excited to welcome our students back for the 2017-2018 school year as staff gears up for another successful year at Renwick. I have no doubt both parents and students are ready for the year to begin as well.

I hope the new online enrollment option improved your back-to-school enrollment experience. The feedback we received found the majority of parents appreciated the change. We will work hard in continuing to improve this process moving forward.

Another change in the district is the new agriculture and FFA

program. Cheyenne Moyer, who will serve as the program's educator, has been working non-stop since she was hired last spring.

Her efforts have paid off as the program was recently named the recipient of a \$25,000 grant from Monsanto. We are grateful to Cheyenne,

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## Gemini project *(continued from page 1)*

we haven't changed the traditional structure of what we know as 'high school.'"

Thul said the redesign project will be focused on the way the district offers credit and classes at the high school level.

"With changes in technology and the overall differences in students of this generation, there is a need to look at how we deliver content and adjust it to fit the individual needs of students," she said. "This is crucial so that they can move forward and be career ready ---- no longer is the focus on just college. There are many tracks to being a successful member of society and we want our students to be ready for that role."

In order to participate, Renwick achieved the following requirements: approval by Board of Education with a public vote, faculty support with a vote of 80 percent, and support from KNEA or other professional organization.

The districts had to be willing to launch a new school redesign in the 2018-2019 school year and be willing to serve as a demonstration site for other districts in Kansas to study, learn from and visit.

"This redesign will be more about redesigning the system

*"We are an educational community that strives to lead, not follow."*

Tracy Bourne, Superintendent

and mindset of the PK-12 education," said CES Principal Tige Stone. "It is irresponsible and painful to think just how much today's schools systematically look and are run like a school in the 1890's. We have too much research — as well as real world

examples — of better ways to teach our students. We owe it to them to do much better than what we are doing and the state Commissioner of Education has given us the opportunity to do that."

Stone said his staff is energized by the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of educational changes and notes that students and the community's involvement will be key to the redesign project's success.

"In order to offer students the most customized learning experience, we will definitely be getting feedback from them on what their needs are," Stone said. "We will also need the community there with us every step of the way."

"The more community support we have, the better opportunity for Colwich and Renwick to have something truly unique and special in the state and country."

## Superintendent's message *(continued from page 1)*

who completed and submitted the application, as well as 18 farmers who nominated Renwick for this grant. The honor will enable the program to purchase additional supplies in its first year that otherwise would have delayed.

Preparation for the program's implementation also included repurposing the former band and home economics building to house FFA.

Thanks to all of the community members who volunteered time and labor to make this possible.

I am also pleased to announce USD 267 is one of the participants in the Kansas State

Department of Education's school redesign project. Colwich Elementary School and Garden Plain High School have been selected to be a part of the Gemini Program.

During this school year they will be developing new ideas, strategies and plans that will allow every student to obtain what they need from their education experience.

We are proud to have been asked to join this program, and we look forward to the challenge.

I want to express again how greatly I value the educational community of Renwick.

The passion and support of our parents and patrons remains one of



Andale High School FFA students learned about career opportunities in agriculture during a FFA conference in Kingman. More than 400 students from FFA chapters in the area attended.

the district's most valuable resources. Our continued efforts ensure USD 267 will remain a great place to educate students. As I begin my eighth year as your

superintendent, I thank you for allowing me to serve you in this role.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

## Pitch perfect: McCoy picked for National Honor Choir

**M**egan McCoy knows her way around a keyboard. And she plays a mean clarinet. But after joining choir at Andale High School her sophomore year, the talented musician perhaps stumbled upon her favorite instrument of all.

Her own voice.

“Honestly, it feels more personal because (singing) is using your own body as your instrument,” said the AHS student, who just started her senior year. “Choir just feels more like home than band or orchestra because of that.”

As she begins the first few bars of a soulful melody, listeners can’t help but become drawn to the rich, full tone of her bell-tone alto voice.

As it rises and falls, it’s easy to understand how McCoy feels at ease as she sings.

It’s a voice McCoy will share on a much larger stage as she prepares for the opportunity to participate in the National Honor Choir later this fall in Florida.

The AHS choir member tried out and secured a spot in the Kansas District Honor Choir in Kansas as a junior. As a member of one of the seven district choirs, she was then able to audition for State Honor Choir, which she nabbed a seat on as well.

In May, she decided to try out for the National level and found out in August that she was one of 260 students to be chosen. She sang an Italian aria and the alto part of a traditional English Madrigal.

“I was honestly kind of surprised, but so excited,” she said. McCoy will participate in a three-day music clinic as part of the experience, and then perform with the national choir at Disneyworld. “I’m excited to be around so many others who love singing as much as I do.”



Megan McCoy earned a coveted spot on the National Honor Choir after submitting an audition last spring. The Andale High School senior, pictured with Angela Loganbill, AHS vocal music instructor, will participate in a music clinic and concert as part of the choir in Florida this fall.

After graduation next May, McCoy plans to pursue a degree in music. Until then, she’ll enjoy seeing just how far her love for music can take her — and

encourage others to pursue their passion.

“Give everything a shot,” she said. “Try it ... you never know what might happen.”

# Food for thought: New director joins district

*Heidi Wells, RD, LD, joined Renwick as Food Service Director in August, having most recently worked for the Kansas State Department of Education. Wells, who holds three degrees from Kansas State University – human nutrition, dietetics and kinesiology – helped fuel KSU athletes as a student sports nutritionist. She is currently pursuing a master's in health and human performance through Fort Hays State University. A mother of five who lives south of Cheney with her dairy farmer husband, she stays active with a membership at a CrossFit gym and enjoys hunting and trap shooting when she's not cheering on her beloved KSU Wildcats.*

### **What was your favorite school meal growing up?**

This is a tough question because I truly loved and appreciated all of the meals our school food service provided us. Like Renwick, the school district I grew up in made many of their breads from scratch, and our director was ahead of the game when it came to following the dietary guidelines as fruits and vegetables were the center of our plates even 20-plus years ago. If I must narrow it down to one meal, it would have to be chili and cinnamon roll day. We would get a bowl of chili, cinnamon roll, fresh vegetables or a salad with dip, fruit and milk.

### **Your favorite school meal so far?**

My favorite school meal at Renwick was the Steak Fingers, whipped potato and gravy, cooked carrots, fresh plum, homemade whole grain dinner roll, and milk. However, this was before I experienced Stromboli day. Now, Stromboli tops my list with Steak Fingers a close second.

### **What is your favorite snack that is also healthy?**

I have many favorites when it comes to healthy snacks. Simply Go-Gurt is my “go to” snack right before early morning workouts, and low-fat flavored milk is my favorite recovery drink. Trail mix, fruit with cheese stick, Greek yogurt or fruit on top of cottage cheese are some of my favorite afternoon snacks. But, hands down, a bowl of whole grain cereal with low fat milk as a bedtime snack is my absolute favorite.

### **The food everyone should try to include in their diet is ...**

Low-fat dairy products. They are one of the most nutrient rich foods, with up to nine essential nutrients per serving.



Renwick's new Food Service Director Heidi Wells ensures the district serves up a balanced plate of nutritious, delicious food to fuel students' minds and bodies.

They provide a great source of calcium, which helps maintain good bone health and can also lower the risk of some diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. And, as a mom of five kiddos, they are very affordable.

Dairy products are especially important for our kids, which is why milk continues to be an important component of school meals. If you are lactose intolerant, no problem. Lactose-free dairy products provide the same essential nutrients, just without the lactose.