From the Superintendent’s Desk
By Michael J. Sieh

The Fight for Lower Property Taxes

I have lived in Northeast Nebraska my whole life. I grew up on the family farm in the 70’s and 80’s (great times and memories for me). However, I remember the struggles my family had paying their bills for the farm economy had its ups and downs (mostly downs). Toward the end of my farmhand experience, interest rates were in the teens. Good time to have money invested and poor time to borrow money. Unfortunately, few had any money to invest. If you did not inherit the farm, you did not farm.

Through these times and continuing into today, a quality school has always been the wishes of every community. For example, my dad saw a quality education as a ticket to good times (mostly downs) . Toward the end of his time, he felt that quality education was needed to help his children have a better life.

In education today, we live in a competitive environment. Students can enroll in any school in Nebraska.

Many rural communities have a shrinking number of families. For Stanton, employment opportunities in Norfolk have provided stability to our student populations. However, in the past three years, we are down 50 students.

How do we make Stanton attractive to new families? As you can imagine, I believe that an excellent educational facility is a draw for many families. Our facilities must be competitive with Battle Creek, Clarkson, Howells-Dodge, Leigh, Madison, Norfolk, Pierce, Winside, Wisner-Pilger, etc. I hope the near future brings Stanton a new elementary school with room for future expansion.

However, this article is not about building a new elementary but a focus on property taxes. I just wanted to establish some history for the rest of the article.

School funding in theory is a three-legged stool. The three legs of the stool are property, income and sales tax. Each leg is to provide an equal third of the necessary funding to operate a school.

In the past 6 years, we have seen property valuation for the Stanton district increase by 60%. During the same time, we have seen state aid (income and sales tax) decrease by 88%. This has caused an increase in property taxes paid of 34%. This increase was necessary to maintain quality education and the current programs we offer at the Stanton Community Schools.

When the farm economy was healthy, the increase in taxes was easier to swallow. However, since the farm economy has lapsed, taxes have remained the same and state aid will not come back to the level of 6 years ago.

One may ask, “What can we do?” I would suggest that we control spending by being fiscally responsible by building a conservative budget. We also need to delay our future building needs. Keep in mind, delaying building needs means we continue our conversations and planning for the future.

School aid is the largest line item on the state budget. However, the state has failed to keep up with the property valuation increases causing most rural schools to receive very little funding from the state. We have seen a tax shift over the past several years. We need to work with our rural senators to educate the urban senator on the effects this shift has had on property owners.

Last year, Senator Briese from Albion had a very good starting point for immediate property tax relief. His bill, LB 1084, would have generated new revenue from sales and income tax sources. It also would have directed revenue to state funding of K-12 education. The bill was to increase the amount in the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund. It also placed soft limits on K-12 property tax requests to ensure property tax relief. And finally, the bill would have required the Nebraska Department of Education to study the current educational funding formula.

Let me know if you have additional ideas to lower property taxes!
The Principal’s Perspective
By Dave Cunningham

Information Provided

#MustangPride
The administration and teachers of Stanton Middle/High School (5-12) are offering an incentive program this year to give students an extra positive incentive to be in school and on time each and every day. Research shows that when students are in school, their grades reflect it in a very beneficial way. On top of the incentive program is the monthly perfect and outstanding (less than one day absent) attendance, where students receive certificates for their monthly attendance achievements.

Transportation
Transportation in schools is one of the toughest parts of the school environment. Many times, the school bus and driver are the first things a student sees in the morning. That morning bus ride can make or break a student’s day. Not only does the bus driver make an impact on students riding the bus, other students do also. There are a myriad of positives and negatives that can take place on a school bus.

Students riding a school bus to school or home from school can learn numerous good and bad things on a school bus. Students in all grades ride the school bus to and from school creating some interesting dynamics because of the age discrepancies.

Several little details can be cleaned up with the help of parents talking with their student that is riding the bus and reviewing the bus rider rules located in both the high school and elementary handbooks.

Students of all ages have colorful language that they use when not around mom and dad or their guardians. Please remind your student that rides the school bus that they need to be a model of good behavior and language for the younger students. Younger students will model their behavior after the older students and the problem just goes in a vicious circle. Please talk to your student about the proper language and behavior on a school bus.

Loud talking, laughing or unnecessary noise diverts a driver’s attention and may result in an accident. Students need to be seated at all times and may not leave their seat until so told. Horseplay is not permitted on the school bus. Students are expected to be courteous to fellow students and the bus driver.

To ensure the safety of all students transported by school busses, the following procedure will be in effect should a student violate the outlined regulations.
1) Verbal warning from the bus driver to the student, and a telephone call to the student’s home.
2) Written warning to parents.
3) Suspension from the bus for a period of two weeks.
4) Suspension from the bus for a semester or the remainder of the school year.

Please spend time talking with your child(ren) about what proper behavior should look like. Distracting the driver with inappropriate behavior can cause accidents. We want students to arrive at school safely, and we want students to return home safely. Please take the time to speak with your student(s) about the proper behavior that is expected on the bus when riding. With everyone working together we can offer a safe mode of transportation to make sure all students are safe.

Hot Lunch/Breakfast
Please remember to keep your family lunch account balance in the positive. Fifth - 12th grade students are to be notified of negative account balances in the morning and will be permitted to call parents at this time. Please keep your lunch accounts in the positive. Email statements for all family lunch accounts, negative or positive, are sent on Mondays and Thursdays of each week that school is in session. Unfortunately, with the ever-increasing cost of food, it is not feasible for the school to keep financing breakfast and lunch and never getting reimbursed.

Activities Passes
Activity passes are on sale in the high school office. Please stop by and purchase yours for the year.
- Couple - $110
- Adult - $60
- Senior Citizen/Students - $30

Gate Workers
Parents should have received a letter outlining their dates and duties to work for games. The letters sent were for gate workers for the entire year. Game workers may have to switch duties because of prior conflicts but please find your replacement and let the office know by emailing or calling. Hosting of contests cannot run smoothly without the help of everyone. One missing link can cause an undue burden on someone else. Please let us know if you have switched duties so we can make sure a contest runs smoothly.

Go Mustangs!!!!

Kindergarten. What do I expect? The new school year brings new student faces to the elementary school. We want to welcome all of our new boys and girls to Stanton Elementary! Perhaps no grade has changed as much as kindergarten over the past few decades. Most children now attend full-day kindergarten as opposed to the half-day programs we used to use. For most of our kindergarten students, this is not their first school experience. They have already attended prekindergarten classes or participated in kindergarten readiness programs.

These shifts have affected what kindergarteners learn. We have stepped up the level of academic expectations. At Stanton Elementary, by the end of the school year we expect kindergarten students to be reading many sight words, reading three letter words, and retelling information about the setting, events and characters in stories. In math, by the end of the year, they should be counting, reading, and writing to 100, demonstrating the meaning of subtraction and addition, and identifying, classifying and ordering objects. These are just some of the objectives in our reading and math curriculum. Most of the school day in kindergarten is focused on reading and math, but other subjects, including science and social studies, are taught. Of course, don’t get me wrong, the kindergarten rooms still make room for the staples that 5 and 6 year olds love: manipulatives, recess, center time and loads of books!

The kindergarten students are assessed year-round against a set of benchmarks. Checklists are abundant. Parents can help their kindergarteners achieve at school by reading with them every day and encouraging them to observe the world around them. Providing a wide range of experiences and opportunities will help them develop their vocabularies. Your child will also have homework this year. Please help them reinforce their skills at home. Hopefully, with all of us working together, our kindergarteners will be ready and confident when the time comes to be first graders.

Messages from Mrs. McKeon
By Mary McKeon

I’m Here! Now What?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>2nd Quarter</th>
<th>3rd Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch Provided - Pizza Party</td>
<td>Day off of school on 11:35 am dismissal</td>
<td>Breakfast (3rd Q honor roll breakfast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No behavior referrals, detentions, ISS, OSS</td>
<td>Must not be on the fall list or the about to fail list during the 2nd Quarter</td>
<td>Perfect Attendance, No tardies or absences unless a school activity, college visit, or immediate family bereavement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Stanton High School Student Council has set homecoming week for October 1-5. The king and queen will be crowned on Friday during coronation.

- Days of the week are as follows:
  - Monday-Disney, movie, celebrity day
  - Tuesday-sports day
  - Wednesday- fashion disaster
  - Thursday- senior citizen day
  - Friday-Mustang Pride day

Students are encouraged to show school spirit by dressing up in the different themes each day. Prizes will be awarded for each day. Also, during the week, there will be a wall or poster decorating contest for grades 5-12.

On Monday, October 1st, the girls' golf team will compete at districts. Tuesday, the MS volleyball team will be competing in Madison at 5:30 p.m.; and the C, JV and V volleyball teams will be competing against Howells-Dodge in Howells. On Thursday, October 4th, the boys' and girls' cross-country teams will be participating in the EHC meet at Logan View while the Stanton Mustangs volleyball C and JV teams will be competing at home against Bancroft-Rosalie-Lyons-Decatur. Friday, October 5th, the middle school and the high school boys' and girls' cross-country teams will be running in Albion.

On Wednesday, October 3rd, grades 9-12 will have an activity sponsored by the student council in the gym at 2:50, while the 5-8 students will have an activity in the middle school gym. At 6:30 p.m. there will be an activity for the senior class at the baseball field. Following the activity there will be a pep rally and the band will play (weather permitting), all occurring on Wednesday night.

On Friday, coronation will take place at 2:00 p.m. in the middle school gym. A parade and pep rally downtown will follow. Music Boosters will be having their annual soup supper in the community building before the football game. The game will begin at 6:30 p.m. against the Ponca Indians. The homecoming dance will be held after the game in the middle school gym from 9:30-12:30 to wrap up homecoming week.

The Stanton community is invited to all activities and games.

---

**Scholastic Book Fair**

**Enchanted: Forest of Books**

(Liekhus) Middle School & High School Students will be able to attend a Scholastic Book Fair this fall. The fair will be held September 24th - 27th in the high school library. The fair will be open the following days:

- Monday, September 24th - 7:45 A.M. - 11:00 A.M./2:30 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
- Tuesday, September 25th - 7:45 A.M. - 11:30 A.M./3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
- Wednesday, September 26th - 7:45 A.M. - 11:00 A.M./2:30 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
- Thursday, September 28th - 7:45 A.M. - 11:30 A.M./3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Please take some time to check out the book fair. There will be a variety of books to choose from. Remember books make great gifts for all occasions. All proceeds will benefit the high school library.

---

**Financial Aid Night**

- October 1st at Stanton High School
- Library 6:00pm

(Fernau) Important information for filling out the FAFSA form!!! Financial Aid Forms are completed using 2017 tax information and the deadlines for submission to colleges have changed. If you have a senior student who is planning to attend college next year, please come to this important informational meeting. If you have a junior who will be attending college in the future, this meeting will also help you familiarize yourself with the processes, how to plan financially, and to prepare taxes.
Counselor’s Corner
By Lindy Fernau

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. National Suicide Prevention week is September 9 - 15, 2018, beginning with World Suicide Prevention Day on the 10th. Suicide is a very serious and very real problem with our youth. Spreading awareness is the first step to helping this problem.

In Nebraska:
• In Nebraska, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 15 - 24 years*
• 251 people in Nebraska died by suicide in 2016
• On average, one person dies by suicide every 1.5 days in the state of Nebraska

*2016 Reports from Center for Disease Control

Warning signs that we look for in school:
• changes in school performance (e.g. grades, attendance)
• changes in mood
• complaints of illness
• increased disciplinary problems at school
• problems experienced at home or family situations (stress, trauma, divorce, substance abuse, poverty, domestic violence)
• communication from teachers about problems at school
• dealing with existing mental health concerns

Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

• Eating or sleeping too much or too little
• Feeling numb or like nothing matters
• Having unexplained aches and pains
• Feeling helpless or hopeless
• Smoking, drinking, or using drugs
• Feeling unusually confused or forgetful; on edge, angry, or upset; or worried and scared
• Fighting with family and friends
• Unable to get rid of troubling thoughts and memories
• Thinking of hurting or killing yourself or someone else
• Unable to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to school or work

Resources
• If you are thinking about suicide, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
• Everyone should have this number on hand in case there is ever an emergency with yourself or someone you love.
• If you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1
• You would not hesitate to call this number if someone else’s life was in danger... don’t hesitate to call for your own life.

National Suicide Prevention Chatline
• http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Safe Place: 1-888-290-7233
• Project Safe Place provides access to immediate help and supportive resources for young people in crisis.

Stanton County Suicide Lifeline: 1-888-370-7003

Suicide is a topic that is very difficult for everyone but if we can be aware of the warning signs for others, and ourselves, we might be able to save a life. If you ever have questions or concerns about a student, please contact Mrs. Fernau at 402-439-2250 or lfernau@esu8.org. My most important job at school is to help students/families with emotional concerns.