



Valley Heights News & Notes

February 2011

www.valleyheights.org

Blue Rapids/Waterville, Kansas

School Finance Impact on USD 498

John Bergkamp | Superintendent

School Finance continues to be the main topic in the 2011 Legislative session. The Governor has proposed a budget that would reduce the base budget per pupil by \$232. State-wide decreases in assessed valuation and increases in both the at-risk students and overall enrollment are the cause for the proposed \$75 base state reduction for the current year. The 2011-2012 reduction of \$157 is largely a result of the loss of ARRA/Federal Jobs funds. Preliminary estimates from last year indicated the cut could be twice that amount, but the Governor's plan replaces a larger portion of the expiring federal stimulus funds than some expected. Overall, our local budget would be reduced by about \$160,000 or equal to about 5 beginning teacher salaries. This \$160,000 is on top of over \$300,000 we have been cut over the past three years.

We understand that our economy is still in crisis mode and we have worked hard to be reasonable and sensible in budget management. In recent years we have reduced staff, deferred maintenance projects, and cut back on educational resources. This year we implemented an energy project designed to save costs on utilities. Staff has not received a cost of living wage increase for the past two years and in order to just maintain status-quo next year, we will need to dip into emergency contingency reserve funds for general operations.

We have attempted to exhaust all avenues to try and save money and not compromise the quality of education we provide. As we continue down this uncertain road we will continue to rely on everyone working together to achieve our mission of managing district policies and resources efficiently, with student achievement as the priority.

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Stop School Violence

Call 1-877-626-8203

This is the toll-free hotline number to anonymously report potential school violence

USD #498 Board of Education's Mission is to provide an education system that will develop the highest level of achievement for all students, educators, and patrons by managing district policies and efficient use of resources.

Valley Heights School District

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Tell Someone!

Don Potter | Junior/Senior High Principal

Valley Heights has implemented an anti-bullying program called Olweus (OI-VEY-us) to prevent and address bullying issues as they occur in our buildings. We do realize that bullying is going to occur and we must deal with those issues either in a proactive or reactive manner. The program insists on four major rules to be followed in schools.

1. *WE WILL NOT BULLY OTHERS.*
2. *WE WILL TRY TO HELP STUDENTS WHO ARE BULLIED.*
3. *WE WILL TRY TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WHO ARE LEFT OUT.*
4. *IF WE KNOW THAT SOMEBODY IS BEING BULLIED, WE WILL TELL AN ADULT AT SCHOOL AND AN ADULT AT HOME.*

The below information is taken from Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Teacher Guide: Rule #4 emphasizes the importance of telling an adult if students know that someone is being bullied. It should be made very clear that rule #4 does not apply only to other students who are bullied, it also applies to situations where a student is being bullied himself or herself. This means, quite concretely: If I am bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home. This rule is based on the fact that a considerable number of students who are bullied do not tell an adult about it, neither at school nor at home. There may be several reasons for this:

- They are afraid of retaliation from the students who bullied them and may even have been threatened with more bullying if they tell.
- They feel inadequate or ashamed for not being able to stop the bullying themselves.
- They feel that the bullying is their own fault and fear being blamed.
- They don't want to worry their parents and give them problems.
- They are afraid that their parents will cause trouble at school by overreacting.
- They are afraid that the situation may become worse if the teacher brings the problem up in the classroom.
- They may have had a previous experience that telling an adult does not solve the problem.

Even fewer students who witness bullying tell adults. Clearly, there is a great need for more open communication regarding bullying problems among students. Rule #4 has been created specifically to stimulate such communication. To some extent, this rule overlaps with rule #2, a natural way of helping students is to tell adults. However, rule #4 amplifies and extends beyond rule #2.

As stated in the above information, it is crucial to tell an adult at school and an adult at home. In a recent survey taken by students at Valley Heights JR/SR High School only 15.6% of the students who have been bullied have told an adult at school. Also, of those same students, only 25% told a parent or guardian at home. Furthermore, the data indicates 34.4% of students who have been bullied told no one. This data is not uncommon, especially with older students. However, this is something that we must improve in order to combat the bullying issue effectively. As a school we urge all parents, family members to notify us immediately if bullying is happening. We will approach the situation very seriously and deal with it appropriately.

Bullying is something that we must battle together. Therefore, communication should be open and honest when dealing with bullying because it is very serious. Additional resources can be found on the Valley Heights JR/SR High website located under the school information link. Please call us with any questions or concerns. Thank you for supporting Valley Heights students and their education.

Just What are State Assessments?

Rhonda Trimble | Elementary Principal

The Kansas State Assessments are based on rigorous academic standards that the State Board of Education has established for all students in the core subject areas of reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. These core curricular standards are general statements of what students should know and be able to do at various grade levels and are provided to schools as a guide in preparing classroom instruction/content. All accredited schools in Kansas are required to administer the state assessments. The questions on the various state assessments represent the knowledge students are expected to have in each subject area, but may not include every item in the state standards. The reading and math assessments will be given every year to students in grades three through eight and once in high school. Valley Heights Elementary will participate in the science, reading, and math state assessments this spring during the months of March and April.

Many parents ask what they can do to help their children be prepared for any tests along with the Kansas State Assessments. Parents can be a great help to their children if they observe these do's and don'ts about tests and testing:

- Do encourage children.
- Praise them for things they do well. If they feel good about themselves, they will do their best.
- Don't be too anxious about your child's test scores. If you put too much emphasis on test scores, this can upset your child.
- Do ask for the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and improve your child's understanding of school work. Parents and teachers should work together to benefit students.
- Don't judge your child on the basis of a single test score. Test scores are not perfect measures of what your child can do.

There are many other things that might influence a test score. Do make sure that your child:

- » attends school regularly.
- » is well rested on school days and especially on the day of a test
- » receives a well-balanced diet
- » is provided with books and magazines to read at home

To promote your child's success on any type of test you should encourage your child to get a good night's sleep. Rest, exercise, and eating well are as important to test-taking as they are to any other school work.

Encourage your children to read the directions carefully when a teacher hands out the test, ask questions if they don't fully understand something, and give their best guess instead of leaving questions unanswered. One of the biggest factors in helping your child to be successful in school and on assessments is to read to your children on a regular basis and listen to them read to you.

All of us are extremely proud of our students' performance on the state assessments, but please keep in mind that they give teachers only part of the picture of your child's strengths and weaknesses. Our focus at Valley Heights Elementary is not just the state assessments, it is to educate the "whole child" – we want to prepare each and every student to become lifelong learners and productive citizens.

This can be accomplished by working in unity with parents and creating a nurturing, caring, positive, child-centered learning environment where all students feel safe to be creative and use their imagination.

Thank you for supporting your child's success in school.

Spring Calendar of Events

MARCH

- March 4**
End of 3rd Quarter—Noon
Dismissal
- March 8**
Board of Education Meeting | 6 pm
- March 7-10**
Elementary P/T Conference Week
- March 11**
Elementary P/T Day
NO SCHOOL (K-6 ONLY)
Junior High Dance
- March 12**
NHS Carnival—BR Gym | 7 pm
- March 13**
Daylight Saving Time begins
- March 14**
Board of Education Meeting | 6 pm
- March 15**
TVL Music Festival @ Onaga
- March 21-25**
SPRING BREAK
- March 30**
Livestock Judging @ Tonganoxie

APRIL

- April 2**
Regional Music Festival
- April 8**
High School Athletic Banquet | 6 pm
- April 11**
Board of Education Meeting | 6 pm
- April 16**
JR-SR Prom/After-Prom
- April 18-21**
Kindergarten Round-Up
- April 19**
Bloodmobile @ VHHS | Noon-6 pm
- April 22**
Good Friday—NO SCHOOL
- April 25**
FFA District Banquet
- April 28**
Highland Art Day

MAY

- May 5**
Nat'l Honor Society Induction/
Banquet
- May 9**
Board of Education Meeting | 6 pm
- May 10**
Junior High Music Concert | 7 pm
- May 17**
Charles Steele Play Day
Spring Fling | 7 pm
- May 18**
Seniors Last Day
Awards Night | 7 pm
- May 21**
Graduation—VHHS | 2 pm
- May 23**
Last Day for Preschool/
Kindergarten Prep
- May 24**
End of Year Elementary Programs
6th Grade Promotion
- May 25**
Last Day of School—Noon
Dismissal



ELEMENTARY STUDENTS CELEBRATE KANSAS' 150th BIRTHDAY ON JANUARY 29

Friday, January 29th, was a full day of fun for Valley Heights' elementary students, learning things about Kansas and the ways of early Kansas settlers. Many activities, including crafts, square dancing and ropin' & ridin' filled their day. Many kids, as well as staff members, wore pioneer attire to school and very much looked the part of their ancestors. At the end of the day, it was "HAPPY BIRTHDAY KANSAS" with cupcakes and miles and miles of smiles.



Kylie Meadows, Kindergarten
Pigtails and all...just right for
dippin' in the inkwell!



Kindergarten Class
Posing after the Dave Sanner family, representing The Pony
Express Riders, helped kids "rope & ride!"



Kansas Day

Laura Musil
Joining the second graders in a
square dance!



Kadin Claycamp
Second Grader
In his cap!



Zoe Flood
First Grader
In her bonnet!



MaKenzie Joseph | Colton Crook
Second Graders
Ready to allemande left and do-si-do!