



HARRISONBURG CITY
Public Schools

The Insider

Highlighting Excellence in Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Kizner's Corner

A message from Dr. Scott Kizner, Superintendent of Schools

Attitude Goes a Long Way

The last few months I have been doing something that I should be doing more often - exercising. Like many people, I reached a point where I said, "The excuses are getting old and it is time to get my derrière to the gym." My goal again is to finish the UKROP 10K race in Richmond on March 31st. Key word is *finish*. I am finding that right now I have the 5K part down well. It is getting harder to cross the midpoint line and prepare for that last 5K. Every time I think about it as I run on the treadmill or in the streets, I find myself battling the little "out of shape" devils slowly walking around in my head saying, "Stop and have a donut." Now, why am I wasting your time reading about my own personal challenges? Because I think for many educators and students, as we enter the second half of the school year, the finish line still seems far away and the energy level might actually be less than it was back in September and October. So let me make these simple suggestions:

- Talk to a student you haven't talked to for awhile (or maybe ever) and learn something new about them - it might feel like you are starting all over again.
- Focus on the positives - increase the number of positive comments you are saying to your students, colleagues, family and friends. Research is clear that positive people have less stress and see the rainbow even when it is storming outside.
- Reflect on what you've already accomplished with your students and let them know how much they have improved and learned since late August. Tell them you are excited to see what the next five months will bring. You and your students should set personal goals for the next 18 or so weeks. Everyone loves a good challenge.
- Read a good book or two (not education related). Take a mental vacation and imagine.
- Buy a lottery ticket but don't look at it until the last day of school. Again, imagine...imagine you won and you are going to buy that toy or do something you've always wanted to do.
- Exercise and/or find some outside activity that will give a sense of accomplishment. Maybe we can have a Harrisonburg 10K team?
- If that all fails - wish for more snow days.

Scott Kizner, Ph.D.





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Technology Cyberbullying

“Cyberbullying, the use of technology to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to frighten or harm others, is a criminal act under the VA Code § 18.2-152.7:1. Any student who uses a school-provided device or who uses a personal device on school grounds with the intent to intimidate, harass, or coerce another person; to use obscene, profane, lewd, or lascivious language to communicate such harassment; or to threaten an illegal or immoral act shall be subject to school disciplinary action. In any instance in which cyberbullying creates a climate of fear and/or causes a substantial disruption of the work of the school or infringes on the rights of other students, the person committing the act shall be subject to school disciplinary action.”
(*HCPS Acceptable Use Agreement, Policy 752R*)

As online activities become a larger part of our children’s lives, the chances for cyberbullying have greatly increased. While the mean comments or nasty notes passed in classrooms years ago were hurtful, cyberbullying extends the audience to the entire world and it can never entirely disappear. Students often do not realize the impact of their actions, so it is important that they are educated about the harmful effects of cyberbullying to lessen the risk that they become a bully or a victim. It is important that schools, parents, and the community work together to ensure that our children have the skills to avoid becoming a bully or a victim.

Lessons on cyberbullying are included in the HCPS internet safety curriculum. Harmful sites are blocked inside of the division, but cyberbullying often takes place outside of schools. It is important for parents to talk with their children and to make sure they are comfortable coming to parents with a problem. Stopbullying.org suggests teaching your child to “Stop, Block and Tell!” if they ever get a mean message. Have them **stop** and not answer back, **block** the person and message, and **tell** you, as their trusted adult, if anything else happens.

HCPS is offering a Bullying Prevention Seminar on January 26, 2012 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Skyline Middle School. Dinner will be provided at 5:30 in the cafeteria followed by two breakout sessions. Child care and Spanish interpretation will also be available.





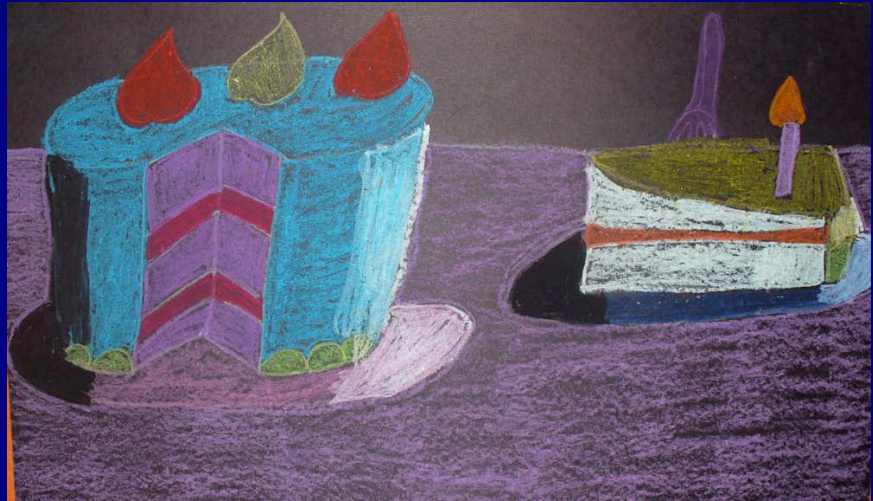
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Stone Spring Dessert and Math in Art?!

Third grade students from Stone Spring Elementary School turned their love of cakes into an exercise in perspective drawing, shading and fractions. Students learned about Wayne Thiebaud (TEE-bo), an artist who's early work as an illustrator for the Walt Disney company influenced his love for cartoon-like paintings. Students then practiced drawing cakes in perspective,



learning how artists make an image look three-dimensional on a flat surface. Then came the math: students had to decide how many layers to include in their cake. Should the cake be divided into thirds? Into quarters? Just in half? Our final step was to add layers of delicious color, learning oil pastel blending techniques. We added highlights and shadows to emphasize the roundness of our cakes. What a delicious project!

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 26: Bullying Prevention Seminar – SKMS – 5:30–7:30 pm
- Feb. 7: School Board Meeting – City Council Chambers – 7:00 pm
- Feb. 10: Schools Closed for Staff Development
- Feb. 14: Early Release
- Feb. 16-19: HHS Musical *Les Miserablés* – HHS
- Feb. 21: School Board Work Session – School Board Office – 7:00 pm



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Keister Finds New Focus in the New Year

For many, the new year is a time to find ways to improve ourselves. At Keister this year, we have utilized an opportunity to rethink our work and our focus as we view our school through the lens of the Effective School Correlates. These correlates were identified by Dr. Larry Lezotte following years of research regarding the fundamental characteristics of effective schools. The 2011-12 school year began with an abandonment of most of our existing committees and a reorganization of every staff member into Effective School Correlate Teams. Teams met in August and began the process of interpreting the meaning of their assigned correlate as it applied to our school, our students and what we know about teaching and learning. This was an important time as we learned to know each other better, to trust each other and to believe in the value of every voice. Correlate teams have moved beyond the interpretation of the correlates to identifying and recommending actions they feel will improve our school. To date, these are some of the many good ideas we are implementing!



- Students serve as “Morning Greeters” to welcome all who walk through our doors.
- Our mission is being communicated using words young children understand.
- A teacher-created blog identifies strategies and resources to help us meet the needs of every student.
- The frequent use of “exit tickets” helps us hold all students accountable for their learning.
- The creation of a Learning Buddy program provides an opportunity for upper and lower grade classrooms to work together with clearly focused objectives.
- Teacher strengths have been identified and a video library of our staff demonstrating their instructional expertise is being created.
- Keister families are creating hallway displays that celebrate the cultural diversity of our school.
- Connections between home and school are growing as we visit together in the homes of our students. More than 150 home visits have been made this year.

We are excited about the opportunities for shared leadership that our Effective School Correlate Teams provide! We continue our work to build an effective school “where together we work for the success of all,” one step at a time.



Smithland

EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN, READ! EXERCISE YOUR BODY, MOVE!



Students at Smithland Elementary School are channeling their reading energy toward this year's school-wide reading incentive, EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN, READ! EXERCISE YOUR BODY, MOVE! By logging their reading minutes, students receive a paper sneaker for every 100 minutes of reading. Once decorated by the students, sneakers make a path from our library to the gym and beyond. Students eagerly look for their sneaker and see how long the path is each day.

The incentive was kicked off before winter break with a school-wide dance to "Gotta Keep Reading"; every student was given two books to take home for the holidays. Since then, we have had JMU student-athletes visit classrooms and read with our students. In February, students will work to exercise their bodies in PE with Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart. There will be a station in the gym where students can "rock and read."

On February 14, we will celebrate our reading with our second annual WE LOVE READING day. At a reading pep rally, each grade will present a reading cheer, and we will see just how many hundreds of thousands of minutes we read.

Please Note: Change to School Calendar

The Parent Conference Day scheduled for March 8 has been moved to March 6.

March 6 will no longer be a regular school day for students; March 8 will be a regular school day.



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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT....

Hanley Chiang



Our featured alumnus is Hanley Chiang, who graduated from Harrisonburg High School in 1999. After graduation, Hanley earned a BA in Economics and Mathematics from the College of William and Mary in 2003 and then went on to receive a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard University in 2008. Hanley currently lives in Boston, MA and works as a Social Policy Researcher with Mathematica Policy Research (<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/>).

Please describe the work you do.

I assist school districts, states, federal agencies, and foundations to evaluate the effectiveness of education policies. My work primarily involves statistical analysis of education data to assess the impacts of policy interventions on students and teachers.

What are some of your hobbies?

One of my favorite activities is to tutor children who are striving to improve their academic skills. I also love hiking and reading about history and current events.

Is there a particular HCPS teacher who had an impact on you?

From kindergarten to 12th grade, every HCPS teacher I had touched my life in a positive way. I could spend a day describing the numerous ways in which my teachers left an impact on me! I'll just give one example. Ryan Sensenig, who taught me Ecology at HHS and helped organize a summer science expedition in which I participated, impressed upon me the complexity of environmental policy issues. He encouraged his students to think critically from the perspectives of all stakeholders who would be affected by a policy choice. Having had Mr. Sensenig as a teacher and mentor, I am more understanding and respectful of multiple sides to each policy debate – even beyond environmental issues – which has made me a more informed citizen.

How did Harrisonburg City Schools help prepare you for college and/or your career field?

My 13 years in HCPS instilled in me a love for learning that has motivated me to work toward ensuring high-quality public education for future generations of children.



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THMS

Students Learn Real-Life Skills

THMS students are learning skills for academic and future success. All 5th and 6th grade students at THMS are enrolled in learning skills classes. These classes help students practice basic student skills, interpersonal skills, and provide enrichment through STEM activities. Xaviel, a 5th grade student in Mrs. Keesling's class, says that he likes everything about the class: "I like the typing and the challenges to build structures but mostly the worm project!"

Students practice basic skills of organization, planning, and goal setting. Students in 6th grade prepared projects, which they will present to 4th grade students, based on what they have learned it takes to be a successful middle school student. Students accessed their primary intelligences to do the projects. For example, the visual learners prepared posters and a PowerPoint presentation. Those students with strong logical intelligence created a puzzle with successful tips embedded. Our musically inclined students wrote and performed a song about school success. Students also spend time learning keyboarding, and the hard work is paying off. Our computer instructor, Greg Corder, has never seen a more proficient group of 5th grade typists in all his years of teaching.



Students continue to learn about themselves in lessons prepared by the counseling department and staff from the Boys and Girls Club. Shequela Corbin from the Boys and Girls Club spent time with the 5th graders teaching the nationally recognized Positive Action program which focuses on "teaching and reinforcing positive actions for a lifetime of health, happiness, and success." Counselors educate students on how to build appropriate friendships and will be conducting bullying workshops.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the program is the STEM activities. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) seeks to integrate the Technological and Engineering Design process with real-world problems related to Science, Math, and Social Studies. Amy Sabarre has collaborated with teachers to create lessons on worm habitats, designing strong pasta structures, communication, and designing a balloon vehicle that will travel through an obstacle course. Through these activities and the entire course, students are truly learning the four C's of STEM: Creative Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Communication!



We've Moved!

The Central Office staff has moved to our new downtown location at One Court Square. These accommodations will better facilitate the work we do to support education in Harrisonburg City Schools.

Our phone and fax numbers remain the same, but please note our new mailing address:

**Harrisonburg City Public Schools
One Court Square
Harrisonburg, VA 22801**

**540.434.9916 (phone)
540.434.5196 (fax)**

We plan to host an open house for community members to see the new space - more information will be coming soon.



*Newsletter edited by Kelly Lineweaver
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