

FOCUS

Ashland Independent Schools

Superintendent's Letter

My personal philosophy as an educator, I feel, mirrors that of our Board of Education. The safety and welfare of our students and staff must be our primary concern. In order to provide an appropriate, effective classroom instructional environment, all peripheral aspects of our daily operations must be addressed. Clean, orderly classrooms comfortable throughout the changing seasons and weather conditions are provided throughout our district. However, the onslaught of winter weather conditions in the Ohio valley does not always provide for an abundance of planning and organization in getting students to and from school.



We transport approximately 1,000 students on a daily basis out of the 3,259 total student population. Determining whether we will delay or possibly close for the day is not a quick decision, nor is it made without a reasonable degree of effort. In the total decision-making process, those students who are transported by parents or those who drive to Blazer High School are also included in our early morning conferences. The safety of our buses and every vehicle headed to each school site is a consideration. When inclement weather is forecast, as imperfect as this system may reflect, we sometimes are presented with information that does not definitively direct us to make a specific decision. Actually, most of the time we cannot make as quick and convenient a decision as we would certainly hope to do. As a Superintendent who served this district many years as the Assistant Superintendent, who had transportation and maintenance as a couple of my assignments, I have a background in both trying to gather all the information needed and then making a decision always based upon the safety and welfare of every student and staff member. Fortunately or unfortunately, we don't usually get a blizzard in early morning that allows us to get all of our media announcements out before the 6 p.m. or the 1 p.m. news which in turn allows staff, parents, caregivers, and all involved in our educational system to conveniently prepare for the next morning. It just doesn't work that way!

A typical preparation for addressing anticipated weather problems varies based upon when the bad conditions are predicted to appear. We implement a common practice of being out in the late night or early morning hours to drive the streets, stopping and talking with the Ashland Police officers on night patrols, making calls to the local State Police Office, and even having conversations with the Ashland Street Department staff who are commonly out scraping or salting. Our day usually begins about 3 a.m. when Joe Fraley, our transportation director, calls and we decide what areas of town we will take. Jamie Carrico, Bus Supervisor, also assists us at this early hour and we drive for an hour or so and then convene about what we have found. I usually come to my office by 5 a.m., check the weather reports, talk with law enforcement and then make a determination if it is safe enough to have school. I remember so fondly as Assistant Superintendent, my two daughters sitting on the couch, after many calls from school friends, staring at me for some semblance of information before going to bed with the knowledge that "we are out tomorrow!" Well, it's not that easy most of the time. But I have to give great credit to the Ashland street department for the wonderful job they do to make our streets as safe as possible as soon as possible each night when conditions warrant.

The Ashland Independent Schools being in a city with a mere 16 square miles of roadways is so much more manageable than our neighboring county districts that have roads that are sometimes quite difficult to traverse in good conditions. So, many times they are out for days at a time when we don't miss a beat in our daily instructional program. My deepest thanks to all of you, parents, staff, especially our students for your continued support and patience with our process, which sometimes may seem imperfect, but it is with our deepest commitment to the safety and welfare of our students and staff to provide the very best instructional program possible.

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District News



Ashland Independent Schools

The Ashland Independent Board of Education, Superintendent Steve Gilmore, Administrators, Staff, Parents, and Students want to thank the readers who participated in the Independent's Readers Choice Awards and voted us the...

Best School District
Best High School Band
Best Coach Tony Love



Best High School Football Team
Best High School Basketball Team
Best High School Soccer Team

Ashland Does
 "Whatever It Takes" For Our
 Students To Be Successful!



McKinney-Vento Grant

The Ashland School District is in the second year of a three year McKinney-Vento grant. The grant is designed to provide services and assistance for students who have been identified as homeless. The homeless definition is broad. It may include any student who is:

- Living in a hotel/motel
- Doubled up living with other family or friends due to economic hardships.
- Unaccompanied youth (children or youth who have run away or have been kicked out of their home)
- Children or youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing etc.
- Children or youth living in a homeless shelter

The McKinney Vento grant is able to assist students and their families with limited clothing and shoes, food, enrollment barriers, transportation, attendance, mental health screening and other assistance as needed. Last year Ashland Schools identified 258 students as homeless. Support was provided in over 800 instances. If you know of a family who qualifies for assistance contact the schools for a referral.

We are in that special, magical, time of the year when we are excited and joyful in making others happy while we make extra efforts to reflect our care and concern for family and friends. Maybe it should be a practice that spread throughout the entire year! It is a time of thanks and thoughtfulness...really a time to reflect and consider what is truly important in our lives.

I want each of you to know and appreciate the significant role that we fulfill in the lives of our students, their families, and all our co-workers throughout the year. We have such a "sacred trust" to care, nurture, and yes, to teach those in our charge to become the very best they can be, now and into the future. It truly is a vocation like no other with a responsibility like no other. I am so proud of you and the wonderful works that you are providing.

Learning is also for us...you never stop. I have learned that, no matter what happens, how difficult it may seem today, that life will go on and it will be better tomorrow. I have learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle rainy days, the elderly, those less fortunate, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas lights. I've learned that 'making' a living is not the same as making a 'life'. I've learned that sometimes life gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands...you need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you, but if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your position in life, and always striving to do the right thing, to do your best, and to treat others the way you want to be treated, happiness will find you. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that when I have pains, I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love the human touch...holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. My sincerest hope is that each of you enjoy this wonderful time of year and that you and those you hold dear, have the health and happiness that you so richly deserve.

Merry Christmas,

Steve Gilmore



Ashland Head Start



We had our kick off for our first "Family Game Night" of the year on Thursday evening, and it was very successful. There were lots of games, snacks, and of course the most important ingredient, lots of families.

Most families have

busy schedules. With parents facing challenging and stressful careers and kids engaging in a host of extracurricular activities, many families find that there is no time left to be together as a family. Quality family time spent playing games allows parents the opportunity to nurture their children and develop a trusting and caring relationship which is so vitally important in these unsettled times. Board games are an effective tool for family communication. Board games increase attention, listening, and concentration skills, enhance vocabulary, encourage higher level thinking skills, and teach good sportsmanship. All in all, a family that plays together stays together. See you in January for our next "Family Game Night".

Try this website for a Family Challenge on games:
www.millionminute.com



The annual head start Christmas program "Home for the Holidays" was Thursday, December 19, 2013.

Mrs. Dee's Class



We are studying animals in our classroom. The children are guiding us through different animal classes as we have investigated monkeys, big cats, bats, spiders, horses, and fish. This week we went on a field trip to Bert's Pet Store in Russell, KY. After handling a snake and ferret we concluded our visit by shopping for the school's fish aquarium. We are excited about the amazing things we have learned and cannot wait to see what else there is to explore and learn.



Mrs. Nancy's Class

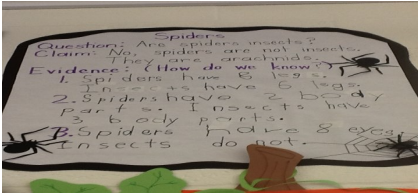
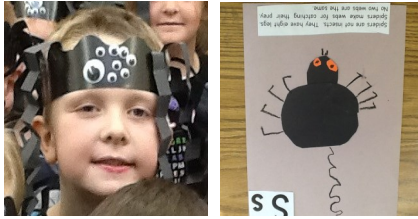
During the month of November, we discussed what we were thankful for.

During our lunch on Thursday, November 21, we dressed up as Pilgrims and Native Americans. The

students made their own clothes, which was made out of paper bags. We made butter from whipping cream. We discussed how they could not go to the store to buy clothes or food like we do, that they had to make their clothes and food.

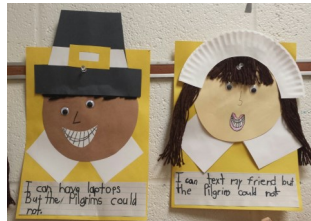


Crabbe Elementary School



Crabbe kindergarten kids have been learning about spiders. Their teacher posed the **question**: Are spiders insects? Students made the **claim**: "No, spiders are not insects. They are arachnids!" Students then provided three pieces of **evidence** from researched data that supported their claim!

First grade celebrated Thanksgiving as Pilgrims and Native Americans. Students brainstormed things they do today in the present compared to what Pilgrim children did. They wrote about it and made themselves as Pilgrims and Indians. Students explored inside the Mayflower online, made turkey graphs, and did turkey addition. Students created their own webs and Writer's Workshop books entitles, "I am Thankful For..." After working hard all week learning about Thanksgiving, each class made homemade chicken noodle soup in class and all ate together as a first grade family! Happy Thanksgiving! Thank you to our special parents who helped us make costumes for all of the students!



Congrats to Crabbe Elementary Students and PTO. Our Paramount Tree received a 2nd place ribbon. The Paramount's theme this year was based on a Christmas song. "My favorite Things". Thank you to all the PTO members and students who helped make decorations or decorate out tree. GREAT JOB!



Mrs. Bowling's 4th through 6th grades have been typing up a snow storm. I'm so proud of them! We did take time out and work on a site call Everfi's "My Digital Life" which is a program to learn about privacy, security, cyber bullying, digital relationship, and digital addiction. Keep up the hard work Crabbe students!



Making "Strides" Towards a Healthier Future



The physical education program at Crabbe Elementary is making "strides" towards being healthy! We are using new state-of-the-art pedometers during gym classes so that students have the opportunity

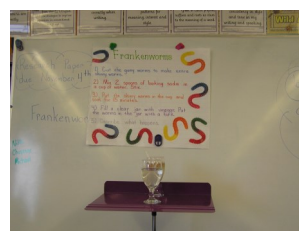
to count how many steps they are taking during PE. These pedometers can also show the students how far they travel and how many calories they can burn! We look forward to continually finding ways to motivate activity and inform our students about the importance of creating and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle.



On Friday, Nov. 1, the 4th graders went on a trip back in time by visiting Heritage Farm Museums in Huntington, WV. A blacksmith, glass bead maker, glassmith, and potter were some of the artisans displaying their unique craftsmanship. Learning how to milk a cow, shuck corn and fetching water from the pump were some of the activities 4th graders got to experience. Viewing the

exhibits in the transportation and progress museums showed the wide change over time in Appalachian life. Stopping to feed a cow, some donkeys and a goat made the tractor ride the favorite event of the day!

Mrs. Norrod's sixth grade students enjoyed participating in a science experiment on Halloween Day. The experiment entitled "Frankenworms" allowed the students to experience what happens when a base and an acid collide. The baking soda and water acted as the base, while the



vinegar was the acid. Gummy worms were sliced into thinner pieces and placed in the mixture of water and baking soda to soak. After they soaked for a while, they were dropped into the glass of vinegar here they seemed to come alive.

Hager Elementary School

As a culminating activity for a unit on communities, third grade students developed projects about their community. The projects included games, power points, videos, models, and other displays. Students also wrote reports about their projects and presented them to the class. Third graders demonstrated a great deal of creativity and thought. The projects were excellent!



The sixth graders have been focusing on careers during their guidance classes with Mrs. Jenkins in preparation for completion of ILP's. Lainey Mattox from the Northeast Area Health Education Center visited our classroom. The goal of this organization is to increase awareness of careers in the health field. She presented "Chemical Reactions", a hands-on activity that allowed the students to compare physical and chemical properties of

a variety of substances, including examples of solids, liquids, and gases. She then focused on a career in pharmacy and the educational required to earn a degree in this field.

Hager's fourth grade participated in The Tobacco Free Academy. Health professionals provided a program sponsored by the Ashland-Boyd County Health Department. The Academy taught the students about the physical and emotional effects of tobacco on their body. The fourth grade students will use this information to develop a persuasive writing piece.



Second grade students enjoyed two guest speakers from our community. First, we had Mr. Grayson who is a conservation officer in Kentucky. Students observed footprints, bones, and antlers from forest animals. Students were also given literature about fishing, snakes, and wildlife in Kentucky. Our second guest speaker was Mr. Griffith, a firefighter in the Ashland Area. He spoke about his career as a firefighter and fire safety. Mr. Griffith brought fire equipment for students to examine.

Hager participated in the 6th Grade Showcase on December 7 at Louisa Middle School. Hager 6th Grade Showcase participants were: Aaron Hill, Langley Sebastian, Will Spade, Kyle McComis, Reece Stevenson and Ethan Hudson. Hager's academic team made up of won the quick recall competition. The results of the written assessments are: Aaron Hill-1st-Math and 3rd-Social Studies, Ethan Hudson-4th Social Studies, Kyle McComis-3rd-Language Arts and 6th-Social Studies, Will Spade-1st-Science and 4th-English Composition. Hager finished 2nd overall in the team standings!!!



Hager's 5th grade spent a Tuesday afternoon Skyping with a US Navy Chief stationed in Norfolk, VA. Chief Wall discussed the ins and outs of his job as well as his involvement with the USS Enterprise on Sept 11, 2001. The students were each able to ask questions and let him know how much they appreciate his work.

First grade at Hager Elementary has been very active learning new and exciting things. They have written letters to a variety of people, read AR books, and learned about shapes. The first graders are excited to participate in Christmas parties and want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Mrs. Keener's class spent a busy week preparing for our annual Thanksgiving feast. If you came by our classroom, you probably heard the sounds of a sewing machine going as we made final preparations on our costumes, the sound of us shucking corn, stringing and breaking green beans, measuring out our ingredients to make cookies, the shaking of a mason jar full of a couple of marbles and whipping cream as we made our butter, and even the occasional "this is hard work" being said from a kindergartener feeling the difficulty Pilgrims and Native Americans must have felt from long ago as they prepared for the very first Thanksgiving feast. On the day of our feast, we dressed in our costumes, set the tables with placemats and dishes, and then spent some time with family and friends as we feasted on our meal. Once the meal was over, our Pilgrims and Native Americans each performed a special dance to show how thankful they were for their visitors. We then spent time completing a special writing piece describing the events and what we felt was our favorite part. The kids loved the hands on experience and enjoyed being able to discuss the difficulties and excitement they had while preparing and enjoying our Thanksgiving feast.

Mrs. Plummer's class has been playing math games this month, using dice, dominoes and cards. Students have been partnering to practice subitizing skills. Playing dominoes was a new experience for the kinders, as they thought dominoes were only used to build designs to knock down! Now they know that dominoes can be used for matching, counting, adding and comparing numbers.

Oakview Elementary School

The Polar Express



Once again, The Polar Express made its annual stop at Oakview Elementary School with a very special guest reader aboard. This year students were treated to a lovely holiday reading by WSAZ-TV3 news anchor Rob Johnson!

The students and their guests, gathered in the darkened gym, lit only with a solitary lamp nestled amid cozy Christmas decorations. Nearby sat an inviting rocker—ready for the guest of honor to proudly read the much-loved story, The Polar Express, written by author Chris Van Allsburg. The children were snuggled in their pajamas, robes, and slippers, for this was the best and perhaps only way to hear one of the most wonderful Christmas stories of all. After the reading, the children found hot chocolate and cookies waiting for them in their classrooms, along with their own special bell so that they might always hear that one pure “jingle” of Christmas.

Fifteenth Annual Animal Shelters Christmas Collections

Students at Oakview Elementary School once again took on their annual holiday service project of collecting for the local animal shelters for the fifteenth year in a row. Students collected a variety of items (new and previously loved) for all of the animals at the shelters. Collections included virtually anything that the animals or shelters could possibly use. Once again, the public also showed its holiday spirit and became involved in this very worthwhile project by bringing donations to the school! The children hoped to brighten the holiday season for the animals as well as remind everyone that there are many wonderful little (and big!) animals at the shelters just waiting to share their love with a family! Have you considered visiting the shelters and adding a new member to your family?



The students at Oakview Elementary collected food items for our 2nd Annual Oakview Elementary Thanksgiving Food Drive. All twenty homerooms brought in canned food and other items as part of Coach Tackett's Random Acts of Kindness unit in counseling. Along with help and

donations from Oakview's Beta Club and the South Ashland Family Resource Center, twelve food baskets were put together to feed families from Oakview. Each food basket came with a turkey, rolls, and all the essential items needed to make a fantastic Thanksgiving meal. Mrs. Baer's girls' group made cookbooks for each basket as well. Last year we were able to feed fourteen families with this project. Coach Tackett would like to thank all of those involved for making this project a success.

The first grade classes at Oakview got into the Christmas spirit early this year by collecting items for Operation Christmas Child. The students collected items for three weeks and were able to fill ten shoeboxes to send overseas to children who would otherwise not receive anything for Christmas. After the boxes were filled, special tracking labels were placed on the top of each box. By mid January or early February, we will find out where the shoeboxes were shipped. Merry Christmas!!!!

The first and fifth grade classes at Oakview Elementary made gingerbread houses. It's an Oakview holiday tradition loved by all!!!

Veteran's Day

The 3rd graders at Oakview Elementary School were proud to present this year's Veteran's Day program on November 11. The students read poems and introduced the 5



branches of the military. We were honored to have many veterans in our audience. The 6th grade chorus sang many patriotic songs with the kindergarten classes accompanying them in sign language. Mrs. Clayton, Mrs. Banfield, and Mrs. Barker beautifully sang “God Bless America”. Mr. Philip Hedrick was the master of ceremonies and introduced our guest of honor, Mr. Chris Bogar, a Marine who served in Iraq. Mr. Bogar presented a slide show of his time in Iraq. The program concluded with Steven Entler playing “Taps” on his trumpet.



6th Grade Showcase

On December 7, Oakview's 6th grade Showcase took first place overall and also had numerous individuals place in specific content areas.

This year's Sixth Grade

Showcase members are Andrea Conley, MacKenzie Clere, Laney Kouns, Christian Sergent, Matthew Raybourn, Logan Coover, Kastin Hoffman, Madison Graham, Dylan Stewart, Ben Fisher, and Gavin Eckard. Congratulations!

Poage Elementary School

Pennies for Patients.

The students at Poage Elementary raised \$891 during their 4th Annual Pennies for Patients drive. The funds, collected during a three-week period, benefit The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to the funding of cutting edge treatments for blood cancers. A special shout out goes to Mrs. Stanfield's 5th Grade classroom that raised over \$240 dollars.



This is....Health Jeopardy!



Classes at Poage Elementary are excited about health this year! Students are getting a chance to play one of America's most popular trivia game shows. Using a Power Point slide created by Mr. Davis, students are playing a health version of the T.V. show Jeopardy. They choose a category and attempt to answer questions about health topics that have been previously covered during class. Students are really enjoying the questions, music, and competition!

The **first graders** now refer to Fridays as Fun Math Day! The whole first grade is combined and students are divided into five small groups based on their needs identified from their MAP testing and classroom assessments. Students play games and complete activities to help develop their skills. Fun Math Friday has shown students how fun learning can really be.



The **fourth grade students** at Poage have been exploring different ecosystems and how organisms survive in their environment. We extended our learning to the outdoors and played a game of survival. The students were the animals in the environment. They had to gather "food, water and shelter" so that they could survive. They found out that when one or more of an animal's "needs" were low in the environment, not all of them could survive.

The past four years Poage has sponsored its very own **Giving Tree**. The tree is decorated with Christmas wish lists from Poage students. This year, twenty-five students at Poage will have a very Merry Christmas thanks to the parents and teachers at Poage.



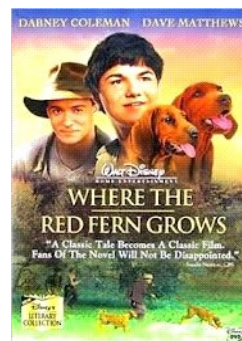
Sixth grade has been busy reviewing the Scientific Method and conducting experiments relating to the Atmosphere. The students used their knowledge about air and wind to create kites from materials they could find in the classroom. After constructing their original kites and making a hypothesis about its ability to fly, it was time to test the kites! Many of the students had success with their kites. The ones who were not as successful were able to use what they observed to make changes and get their kites up and flying!



Mrs. Anderson's 3rd grade students are studying winter holiday traditions around the world. During this study students are researching the traditional holiday celebrations from America, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Japan, Liberia, and Mexico. Students are making Holiday Scrapbooks to illustrate their learning.

Parents are getting involved as well, helping students create cultural gingerbread people, all "dressed up" to match the weather and traditions of a country of their choosing. This is a wonderful way to teach students that we all have traditions and celebrations that are unique to our culture and to respect the cultures of other people and places.

The **kindergarten classes** at Poage have been learning about the customs of Native Americans and the Pilgrims. We also learned the Pilgrims sailed to America on ships. To finish this unit of study we had a Thanksgiving feast together just like the Pilgrims and Native Americans.



Ms. Harding's 3rd grade class has enjoyed practicing its listening/comprehension skills with the reading of Where the Red Fern Grows, by Wilson Rawls. The students have become engaged with the characters, and enthralled with their lives, the story takes place in a setting so very different than what they are accustomed to. The class is also collecting financial donations in order to give an animal/animals to a family in a far off land. This gift will enable the family to

help provide for themselves by giving them training, along with the means to secure income for future growth and development in their neighboring communities. The students are not only learning the meaning of compassion and empathy but how bartering and hard work can help in educating others on how to provide for themselves. What better gift to give in this season of sharing!

Charles Russell Elementary School

Fire Station-The kindergarten classes went to the Ashland Fire Department on October 11 as part of fire safety week. In a meeting room, the students watched a fire safety video. After they were taken on a tour of the fire house including the dorm room, weight room, kitchen, and garage. The students learned what to do in a fire and not to be afraid of the firefighter dressed in his fire suit. Zach Francis & Kyle Webster

Service Dogs-On October 23, Warren Retrievers came to CRS to demonstrate what service dogs can do. One Charles Russell 1st grader, Caleb Elliott, has his very own service dog named Vader. The service dog is there to help him. They can detect needs up to five miles away. In order to protect a person, the dogs have to follow every command. It could save a person's life. Tyler Miller & Richard Runyon



Carving Pumpkins-The first grade classes carved pumpkins on October 30. They all used teamwork to carve the pumpkins and some parents helped, too. They carved funny faces and scary faces. Both classes counted the seeds. One class put them in piles of 10 while the other used 100's.

Mrs. McDowell's class counted 652 seeds and Mrs. Schirtzinger's had 452. The classes had their pictures taken with their pumpkins. The pumpkins were used to decorate the Halloween dance. Rian McKenzie & Josh Thomas

Wildlife Safety-Have you ever run from a bear? Don't do it because if you do, it will chase you and that would not be good. Fourth grader Leah Grayson's father who is an officer with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife came to CRS to talk to Miss Hood and Mrs. Moore's 4th grade classes about nature and wild animals. He says bears are very dangerous and can hurt you bad, even put you in the hospital! He talked about poisonous snakes that live in eastern Kentucky, copperheads and rattlesnakes. He gave lots of good info on how to stay safe, and the kids had fun learning. They hope he returns! - Elizabeth Davis, Bethany Ledford & Noah Crites

Red Ribbon Week happened from 11/5 to 11/10. Our school participated to remind us to be drug free. Some themes we had were: pajama day-dream big, stay drug free; crazy hair or hat day-don't be crazy, stay drug free; decades(60's, 70's, 80's) day-a drug free life is timeless; camo day-we're fighting the war against drugs; and super hero day-be a hero not a zero, stay drug free. The students who won the drawing for character counts are: Eli Miller, Skyla Akers, Natalie McLeod, Noah Wurts, and Kelsie Click. -Hannah Greene & Gwen Akers

Veteran's Day Program was on November 11 at 9 am in the CRS gym. All grades sang songs to show appreciation to our veterans, and the STLP gave each veteran or military person a badge. The songs were patriotic or military songs. The 1st grade played bells, too. Each veteran present introduced himself and could share with the audience.

Our special guest speaker was Jocelyn



and Cassie Jo Damron's dad, Sgt. Christopher Damron, a marine. Every year, CRS loves to have the veterans so they can be acknowledged and thanked for their contributions to our country. -Grant Kelley, Gabby Talamantez & Maggie Thompson

Girl Scout Troop 983 Holiday Celebration was on Saturday, November 23 at CRS. Troop leaders, Kathy Davis and Jane Williams, prepared the food. Troop members and their families, and CRS staff showed up to enjoy the celebration dinner. Some teachers attended: Mr. Manning, Mrs. Ledford, and Mrs. McDavid. There were about 30 total present. The menu had turkey, corn, ham, green beans, rolls, and desserts. The entertainment was provided by the Backstage Players. A scout, Delaney Jackson, and leader, Tiffany Jobe, were in the group. The play called Kobra's Kiss was really good. Everyone had a great time! Elizabeth Davis

Thanksgiving Baskets were prepared by Mrs. Hall's 6th grade class under the direction of Counselor Mrs. Brillhart. Enough food for eight baskets was donated. Seven baskets were given to people in need for Thanksgiving and one will be given to a family for Christmas. The food collected was: stuffing, yams, cake, frosting, rolls, green beans, and corn. Each 6th grade student had a special job to do like collecting food, sorting the food, making cards, looking up addresses, and writing this article. It was good knowing we were helping someone. Josh Rice & Dane Wardle

Food Rock Cycle was studied on November 15 in Mrs. Hall's science class. The students made gross, gooey sandwiches. The sandwiches were made from peanut butter, grape jelly, M & Ms, gummy worms, bread, and marshmallows. See why I said it was gross and gooey. Student teacher,



Miss Bestor, taught the lessons to help us learn about the rock cycle. We made the sandwiches, then sat on them. After that we melted them in a microwave and waited for them to cool off. Finally, we got to eat them and they were gross! When we made the sandwiches and sat on them, they were sedimentary rocks; melting them, they were metamorphic, and after they cooled, they were igneous rocks. I think everyone will surely remember the different ways rocks are made. -Dakotah Forth

Verity Middle School

Student Council sponsored a Glow Dance for the student body in November. The glow court was selected by nominating and voting for students that were most likely to brighten your day. The court included seventh graders Emma Dowdy, Maddy Greene, Parker Clark, Preston Ledford, Sarah Brison, DeVaunte Robinson, Reed Daniel, and Shane Wells. The eight grade court members included Abby Crites, Robbie Krick, Sydni Pierce, Blake Johnson, Hattie Killin, Blaine Collins, Austin Gibson, Trey Rigsby, Kaitlyn Bellew, and Brittany Guerrero. Tyriq Duckwyler and Adrianna Johnson were voted king and queen.

Three outstanding band students made it into the KMEA District 8 Honor Band! Destiny Poole - 3rd Chair Clarinet, Skylar Compston - 13th Chair Clarinet, and Abby Lumpkins - 15th Chair Clarinet.



(Left) A Verity student camouflages himself on the Discovery Fun Friday trip to Wildwood Park.



(Right) Verity Builders Club students decorate the lobby for the Christmas Holidays

Verity Patriot Baseball is hosting a Christmas Baseball Camp on December 28th, from 9AM to 12PM at the Championship Fastpitch Baseball Complex. Players ages 9-14 are eligible to attend. The cost is \$30. Players will receive instruction in fielding and hitting from former collegiate and professional players. Please contact Coach Tim Rice if you are interested. Tim.Rice@ashland.kyschools.us.

Mrs. Hicks' Spanish classes celebrated Día de los Muertos (Day of The Dead) in November. Several of the students made Pan de Muerto (Bread of the Dead) from scratch.

Verity Middle School Band Winter Concert - Thursday December 19 at 7:00 in the auditorium.

Mrs. Williams's web page design classes participated in the hour of code during the week of December 9-13. Students used a visual programming language to write code. This lesson gave students the opportunity to learn the foundations of computer science, concepts which are used anywhere from creating apps to controlling the Mars Rover.



Verity's Academic Team proudly display its awards after another successful meet.

Verity's STLP announced that through its Computers 4 Kids program has refurbished and distributed over 400 computers to families in need of a computer. Verity started in the Computers 4 Kids Program in 2005.

As a part of Kentucky's Assessment and Accountability Model, all schools are required to conduct annual reviews of three different instructional programs. Program Reviews in the areas of arts and humanities, practical living, and writing serve a number of purposes. These purposes include: improving the quality of teaching and learning for all students in all programs, allowing equal access to all students to the skills that will assist them in being productive citizens, and allowing students to demonstrate understanding beyond a paper-and-pencil test. Verity's staff is working hard daily to provide the highest level of instructional programming possible. The Program Review is an on-going, year-round, reflective process. Program Reviews will help our school identify strengths and weaknesses we currently have in arts/humanities, practical living, and writing.

All Verity students are experiencing professional dance with our attendance to The Funkikraker, a ballet performed by the Ashland Youth Ballet at the Paramount Arts Center. Students are continuing portfolio writing as they develop the three modes of writing, in addition to writing in all content areas. In practical living, through the Gear Up program, students are developing good decision making skills as well as exploring career and educational opportunities.

Verity Middle School was well represented at the Virginia R. Harpham Honor String Orchestra Clinic on Saturday, November 9. Eighth grade students from the Verity Intermediate String Orchestra participated in the day-long festival that included many hours of rehearsal, a performance by the Toomai String Quintet of New York City, and concluded with a concert in the evening on the campus of Morehead State University. The students received instruction from Dr. Brenda Brenner, Director of String Education at the Indiana School of Music, as well as music majors from Morehead State. Students who participated were: William Zheng, Lydia O'Nan, Zoe Vance, Chloe Whitlock, Zach Stafford, Dawson Coovert, Ben Fazenbaker, Nya Blake, Lexi Smyser, Evan Billips, and Julia Lyons.



Corrie ten Boon, author of The Hiding Place, is coming to Verity's Dream Team on December 19, during the study of Anne Frank.

Paul Blazer High School



Gingerbread houses made by the Culinary Arts will be on display at the Highlands Museum during the holiday season.

Congratulations to the following students for making the 2014 All-District Jazz Band: Alex Newmark, Troy Burchett, Kamaryn Gose.

And the 2014 All-District Concert Band: Hannah Wade, Nicole Johnson, Cassie Kinner, Jessica Johnson, Derek Carlisle, Tiara Rios, Tanner McKenzie, Jason Davis, Travis Fannin, Shelby Street, Zach Hall, Roman Jenkins, Audrey Deal, Angela Craig, Conor Justice, Nevin Kirk, Layne Wellman.

The following Blazer Choir students have been selected to be members of KMEA All State Chorus 2014. These students will be rehearsing and performing at KMEA Professional Development Conference in February 5-7, 2014: Savannah Blevins, Tierra Carlisle, Emily Cassity, Kelsey Gute, Jessalyn Huff, Aaron Lewis, Danny McGraw, Diane Stapleton.

Blazer FBLA students recently attended the National Fall Leadership Conference in Grapevine, Texas, at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. Members attended many excellent workshops and sessions with great speakers; plus they toured the famous Southfork Ranch where the show "Dallas" is filmed, AT&T (Dallas Cowboys) Stadium along with the Sixth Floor Museum which shows pictures and video of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and is the location where the shooter stood. Attending were State Treasurer, Lakyn McCaffrey, Region Treasurer, Emily Cassity, Elshadai Smith-Mensah, Jordan Steele, Lindsay Rothenstine, Aaron Lewis, Logan Friley, Shannon Rice, Elissa Renneker, Alex O'Neill, Emily Hollingsworth and Cameron Moore; Verity student Kaitlyn Bellew with Advisers Ramona Bellew and Debbie Barnett.



On October 26, our raider team, color guard and drill team had their first competition. Our color guard placed 3rd out of 12 schools. Our other teams did an outstanding job. On November 24 our raider and color guard team are going to Allen Central, so wish them luck. This was a very busy month for our program's color guard. On November 2, Deloris Haney, Patrick Fuda, Christiana Garcia, and

Christiana Hale presented the colors at the boat docks. On the 3rd they were at the Elk's Lodge and on the 7th was Fairview. They

also played a big role in Veteran's Day on the 11th. To kick it off in the morning, Haney, Fuda, Garcia, and Caines were at the Veteran's Cemetery. In the afternoon Noble, Hale, Wallace, and Carroll were here at Blazer to start our Veteran's Day.

After here they were at Poage Elementary. While that part of the team was there Haney, Martin, Fuda, and Conrad was at Verity Middle to help participate for their Veteran's Day. After

that they were at Central Office on the 12th. Not only one team of our color guard was participating there, but two. The last event of this month is the Christmas parade on the 26th. Our color guard will not be the only one's there. Our program as a whole will all be there representing our school's program. On the 16th our raider team and other cadets volunteered to rake leaves for the school. Aside from our teams and program success; our very own Major Matthew Cathy not only received an acceptance letter for admission to Berea but also a full tuition scholarship.

Blazer String Orchestra students Olivia Black, Hunter Gullett, Carlie Geyer, Caleb Geyer and Caroline Geyer along with Blazer graduates Andrew Boyer and Levi Kouns and Ashland String Teachers Dan and Susan Boyer will be performing as part of the orchestra for a "Messiah" sing-a-long. The group along with students from Russell and Boyd County high schools as well as singers and instrumentalists from around the Tri-State will be under the direction of Carl Taylor (choir director at Boyd County H.S.). The oratorio written by George Frederick Handel in 1741 is traditionally performed during the Christmas and/or Easter seasons. The performance will include the entire 1st part (the Christmas section) and the famous "Hallelujah" chorus from the 2nd part. The challenging program will take place on Sunday, December 8 at the Plaza Nazarene Church in Russell and will feature a solo aria performed by Blazer Choir Director, Karen Hopkins as well.



District News

First Lego League

Charles Russell Elementary and Verity Middle School combined to participate in the recent First Lego League (FLL) robotics competition held at ACTC. Five 4th graders (Caleb Campbell, Eli Campbell, Isaac Campbell, Noah Carey, & Luke Geyer), one 5th (Melanie Grimm), and three 7th graders (Alex Kessler, Kaitlyn Lee, & Payton Scott) made up the Ashland Fury Fighters. They are coached by STLP Coordinators, Cynde Elkins and John Leistner. The competition was comprised of four sections: performance, robot design, project, and core values. Each section was judged and a total overall winner was announced. The Ashland team received a second for their project presentation. Mr. Brent Webster, Director of the Boyd County Emergency Management Services, aided the team in preparing their project about providing ice for power outages due to thunderstorms. The team was also recognized for their great dance moves and won the Quack-tastic Award.

The highlight of the competition was the performance section. Each team designed and built a programmable robot out of Legos. Each team then programmed the robot to perform a series of predefined missions using programming software called EV3. The FLL competition challenged the students in math, technology, engineering, language arts, problem solving, science, creativity, teamwork, and public speaking.

The group is now gearing up for a second competition which is sponsored by KY STLP. The competition will be at Morehead State University in February. Congratulations to all of the students who participated!



STLP Regional Competition by Cary Williams

Each fall student technology leaders from across northeast Kentucky meet at Morehead State University to present their latest projects in the STLP Regional Showcase event. Of those who participated, six showcase projects from the Ashland Independent Schools received a score of at least 105 out of a possible 118 points and were invited to compete in the STLP State Championships taking place in Lexington on April 22nd.

Congratulations to each regional qualifying showcase and best of luck in the State Championships this spring!

Crabbe Elementary

AARF Project

Casie Henry, Tyler Reed, Dennaya Ross, Adrianna Riggs



Hager Elementary

Walking to a Healthier You!

Ethan Harrison, Emma Latherow, Micah McClave, Blake Spangler, Caleb Tackett



Oakview Elementary

Parent University

Josie Bevins, Andrea Conley, Logan Coovert, Katie Hutchison, Laney Kouns, Chris Thornburg



Oakview Elementary

There's No Place Like.. A Safe School

Mackenzie Clere, Carley Cullop, Madison Graham, Kastin Hoffman, Matthew Raybourn, Emma Rice, Matthew Street



Poage Elementary

Poage Paparazzi

Maya Blankenship, Gabby Carley, Kate Hanni, Delaney Orndorff



Charles Russell Elementary

Badge 'O Rama

Riley Dixon, Dakotah Forth, Zach Lee, Grace Sluss

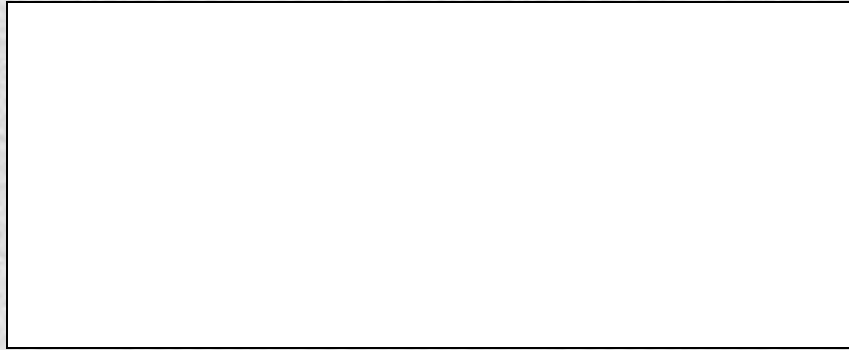


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School Principals

Derek Runyon, Blazer High School
David Greene, Verity Middle School
Brad Greene, Crabbe Elementary School
Phillip Caudill, Hager Elementary School
Debbie Diamond, Oakview Elementary School
Jamie Lester, Poage Elementary School
Steve Salyers, Charles Russell Elementary School
Jacqui Thornburg, Head Start Director

Central Office Personnel

Steve Gilmore, Superintendent
Joe Fraley, Director of Transportation/Maintenance
Lisa Henson, Director of Student Services
Janice Ledford, District Consultant
Patsy Lindsey, Director of Pupil Personnel
Richard Oppenheimer, Director of Student Achievement
Tim Walters, Director of Finance
Cary Williams, Director of Instructional Technology



FBLA students represent Blazer at the national conference in Texas.

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