MSD of Boone Township
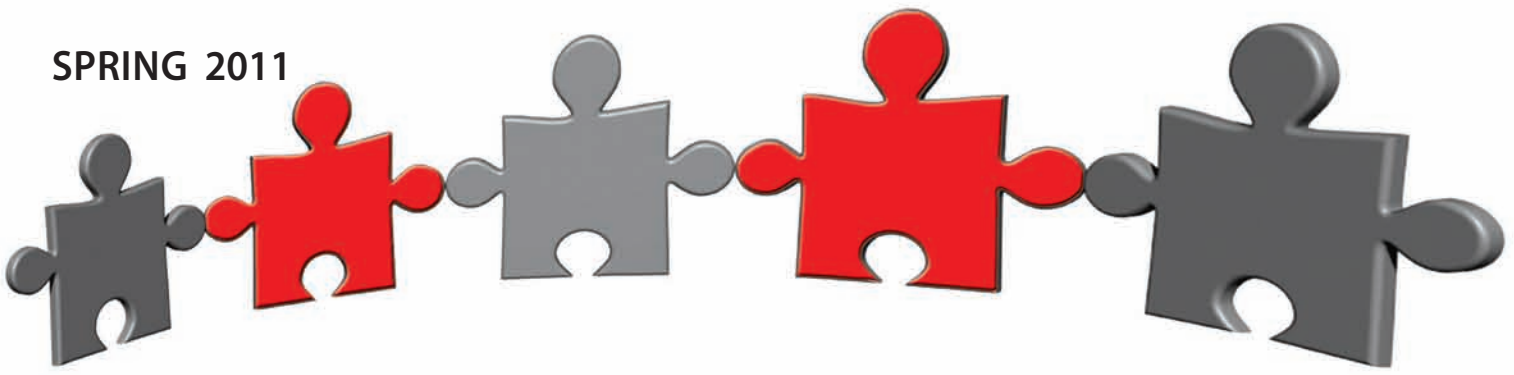*A Place of Learning*

BRIDGES
Connecting the Pieces of Life

Circle the State with Song

Superintendent's **Message**

VOUCHER POINT/COUNTERPOINT

Through the scholarship tax credit program adopted in 2009, Indiana has decided to spend public dollars to pay for certain students to attend private and or religious schools. This practice is divisive and treats other students like second-class citizens while failing to provide a superior education.

As we become more diverse as a people, the public school system stands out as an institution that seeks to unify all Americans. Local governance of schools provides universal public education and reinforces the basic concept of separation of church and state, a principle upheld by our founding fathers. Yet vouchers, which include tax credit scholarships, do just that when they further sectarian schools. The practice separates taxpayers applying for vouchers into a distinct class of citizens and removes opportunities for the balance of taxpayers to choose how their tax dollars will be applied.

The conventional wisdom in the legal community is that House Bill 1003 would not violate the U.S. constitution; that issue was resolved in a 2002 case involving a school voucher program in Cleveland, Ohio. What is not so clear, however, is whether it violates Indiana's constitution. Governor Daniels states he is "100 percent" certain that vouchers are constitutional; but supreme courts in Arizona and Florida have struck down voucher laws in those states.

Currently, as House Bill 1003 is written, a maximum of $4500.00 in state tax funds can be allocated to the parents of a student in grades 1-8 to attend a private school or parochial school in Indiana. The amount of funding a parent would receive is based on income and size of the family. This funding is deducted from the yearly amount per student the public school receives from the state for that student living in the school district.

It has been proven that the much-touted higher performance of private schools is a myth. A Northwestern University study validated what data from the National Center of Education Statistics has long reported: When making comparisons between public and private schools, "it's going to be a wash in terms of test scores." Public schools are equally competitive with private schools when demographic factors are considered for both.

In addition to providing a quality education for all children, our country and state have greatly benefited from the public schools' charge to instill within students a wide range of understanding and tolerance. Our society loses, especially in the long run, if we allow our children to become isolated from others, interacting with only those who think and believe as they do.

If parents want to send their children to private schools that is their choice as the caretakers of those students. Obviously we don't oppose school choice. We only ask that those patrons pay for the private school education with their funds not use the tax dollars of the citizens of the community.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Another legislative bill involving education in the 2011 Indiana General Assembly is House Bill 1002 which would increase the number of charter schools in the State of Indiana and add to the list of sponsors which could approve and oversee a charter school.

Currently the four state funded universities (Purdue, Indiana, Indiana State, and Ball State) can sponsor a charter school which is a public school but which can operate under different regulations than do public schools in conventional school corporations.

Ball State University is the only institution among Indiana colleges sponsoring charter schools at this time. Also, the mayor of Indianapolis currently can sponsor charter schools. Marion County has more charter schools in Indiana than any other county.

A school district can sponsor a charter school in such cases as a school closing due to academic failure for five years and it can reopen as a charter school if that district's board of education takes that action.

A charter school is organized in most cases by a group of people (organizer) or a foundation who completes a report (application) for one of the four universities and the college decides if the "organizer" has met all the requirements to become a charter school. The university is the overseer of the charter school and the charter school must seek continuous approval from the college to operate.

The new legislation would add the number of colleges and universities which would sponsor a charter school from four to an additional 31 colleges in Indiana.

Currently there are 62 charter schools in Indiana since the law allowing charter schools was passed by the Indiana General Assembly several years ago. The increase in sponsors (colleges) would add to the current number of charter schools in Indiana and thus more funding deducted from the public school system. In states where the charter school law is liberal for starting charter schools the percentage of the student population attending charter schools increases: Arizona 23%, Florida 10%, Ohio 8.6% and Michigan 6.2%. Indiana currently has 2% (22,000) students attending charter schools.

Charter schools do participate in ISTEP+testing and are graded (ABCDF) like other public schools in Indiana; however, their teachers can be certified or simply be in the

process of obtaining state certification as compared to the public schools which are required to have only certified personnel in their classrooms.

Charter schools, just like the vouchers, are supported by tax dollars from the public. The funds for charter schools are distributed from the state's "Common School Loan Fund" which public schools use to finance technology and construction loans if their assessed valuation falls within the bottom 40% of school corporations in the state. Hebron High School was partly funded from two Common School Fund construction loans totaling $15,000,000.00. These loans have lower interest rates than lending institutions can provide thus the tax payer saves money during the amortization period. (The years and payments to pay back the loans) A school district loses the amount of money it receives for "basic tuition" reimbursement and that funding travels with the student to the charter school. MSD Boone Township currently receives $5,000.00 per student for each student enrolled in the district.

Finally, a "state charter school board" will be formed which can also sponsor charter schools and will monitor all charter schools in Indiana. Indiana will now have a "State Board of Education" for public schools and a "State Board of Education" for charter schools.

We feel the state should be appropriating funds for "early education" programs and completely fund "full-day kindergarten" as well as providing adequate state funding for every school district in Indiana. Money spent for charter school reimbursement and vouchers could be used to pay for early education and full-day kindergarten.

Please inform your state senator and state representative concerning the funding of education and the need to emphasize early education and full-day kindergarten programs. Senator Charbonneau and Representative Vandenburgh represent this area.

George Letz – *Superintendent*

Hebron Schools Host Circle the State with Song

Hebron Schools recently hosted Circle the State With Song at Hebron High School for the 6th straight year. Circle the State With Song is the Indiana Children's Choral Festival sponsored by the Indiana Music Educator's Association. This choral festival began statewide in 1989 and has grown each year to include concerts at twelve sites all over the State of Indiana each year. At each of those sites, the same concert is performed by students from that area using the same music. In 2010, over 5,000 students participated state-wide in this concert series. Each participating school selects their most talented vocalists in grades 4-9 to prepare the challenging music for the Circle the State with Song concerts. On concert day, students arrive in the morning and rehearse the selected music with a guest conductor. Students rehearse all day and perform a concert in the late afternoon for family, friends and community members. This year's concert at Hebron was attended by over 2,500 people! There were almost 500 students performing in the 2011 Elementary and Middle School Choirs at Hebron High School. Students selected for this performance at Hebron High came from Lake, Porter, Newton, Jasper and LaPorte Counties. This year, Hebron Schools had 38 participants in the Circle the State Choirs. Hebron Schools are happy to host Circle the State with Song, as it is a great opportunity to showcase the town of Hebron and the outstanding facilities of Hebron High School. The Music Staff and Administration of MSD of Boone Township Schools realize that we have superior facilities including our Auditorium, Gymnasium, and Cafeteria which allow for such an event to take place. Hebron High School is scheduled to be the host site again for Circle the State With Song in March of 2012.

Empty Bowls Project

Hebron High School participated in the Empty Bowls project this year. Empty Bowls is part of a worldwide effort to fight hunger. Members of the school and community created some beautiful ceramic bowls with the help of Mrs. Karen Jania and her art students. Guests were served a simple meal of chili, cornbread and a dessert made by Mrs. Phyllis Schaper and her foods class. Guests then selected a bowl to take home and keep as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world. In exchange for the meal and bowl, guests made a donation that will go to the local food pantry and the American Red Cross.

Boys Varsity Basketball

Girls Varsity Basketball

Boys JV Basketball

Girls JV Basketball

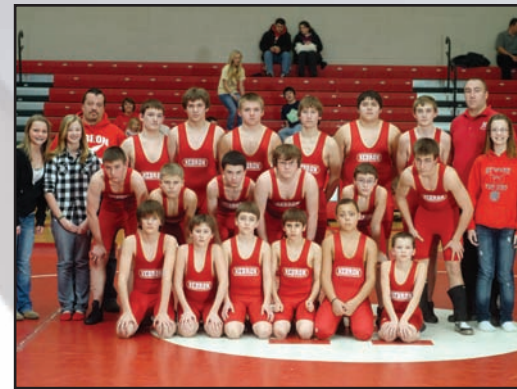**Boys 8th Grade Basketball**

Girls 8th Grade Basketball

Boys 7th Grade Basketball

Girls 7th Grade Basketball

High School Wrestling

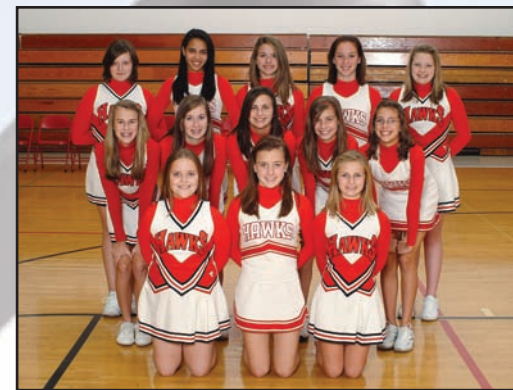**MS Wrestling**

Boys 6th Grade Basketball

Girls 6th Grade Basketball

HS Dance Team

HS Cheerleaders

7th/8th Grade Cheerleaders

6th Grade Cheerleaders

High School News

Extra-curricular activities at Hebron High School include a wide variety of activities. The accomplishments of our athletic teams are publicized in the newspaper, but the high school provides students with interests in addition to sports. The following are among the many clubs and activities that are available this winter and spring.

DRAMA CLUB

Each year the drama club produces two plays. Our fall play included a cast and crew of thirty-five students – nearly 10% of the student body. Rehearsals have already begun for this spring's production of Twelve Angry Jurors. Performances are scheduled for May 6 and 7 at 7:00 pm.

BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA

The BPA fosters business and entrepreneurship skill among its members. Students work on a variety of projects throughout the year and operate our school store, The Hawk's Nest.

ACADEMIC TEAMS

Hebron High School students compete against students from Northwest Indiana and beyond in academic competitions. In early March, at a tournament hosted by Purdue North Central and competing against much larger schools, Hebron students took first place in the social studies category, and tied with Chesterton and Valparaiso for first place in the interdisciplinary competition.

ART CLUB

Among its many projects, the art club sponsored the Empty Bowls Project for the second consecutive year. Students, staff and community members were assisted by the club to make bowls that were given away at a chili supper. Each year the event raised over $2500 to be donated to Hebron Community Food Pantry and the American Red Cross.

It seems that regardless of student interest, there is a club to join. Over 85% of our student body is involved in one extra-curricular activity or another. While extending the curriculum, learning new skills, and providing service to the community, extra-curricular activities add value to the Hebron High School experience.

Mark Lutze – *Principal*

Middle School News

Student engagement is the key to student achievement. It is often said that middle school is the last, best chance that educators have to instill a love for learning in children. Hebron Middle School teachers are taking this charge very seriously. The middle school teachers are engaging learners by varying classroom instruction to meet the needs of every student.

In Science classes, students are learning science through a hands-on approach. Students are using Indiana's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (ISTEM) concepts to learn science using scientific kits. Mr. Pastrick said:

> *After 2 months of testing out the ISTEM project for science, I am convinced it is a very effective method for teaching science. Students are provided with tons of materials that they otherwise would not be able to utilize because of cost. Students are able to work at their own pace and explore some topics further than before. If a student misses a class, the labs are provided on CD-rom so students can virtually experience the lab that was missed. Notebooks are becoming tremendous resources as students learn how and what to write, and further improve their writing skills. I have found that most of the students really enjoy the ISTEM experience they have had so far at this level, and am confident this is the way to go.*

Mrs. Reinhold had this to say about the program:

> *The sixth grade completed the ISI kit "MIXTURES AND SOLUTIONS" first semester and recently completed "Earth IN Space "and extremely enjoyed them. The many activities and materials the students can experience first-hand makes learning more concrete. Students are able to work at an individual pace and to review and expand when it is necessary. When labs are missed, then students can collaborate with classmates to gain missed information. The students are taking ownership of their learning. With the note books the students are creating their own resources to be used and not using pre-determined materials. This makes the information more individualized. Teacher materials are abundant and offer a variety of directions in which to guide the students. I feel the students and I would highly recommend we continue and adopt this program for our school. We enjoy the openness and flexibility and have had a great deal of fun with what we have completed so far.*

And Mrs. Hall had this to say about the program:

> *Participating in the I-STEM Indiana Science Initiative pilot program has been beneficial to our students. This kit based approach to science has allowed our students to take a more active role in their learning. Through this program students use inquiry based learning to understand and learn new content while at the same*

time developing both science processing and life skills. Integral to the success of this program is the use of science journals and science notebooking. Students communicate orally and in written form throughout every step of the learning process. They offer suggestions and feedback to their own group members as well as other groups in their class. The kits also allow for differentiation through both reteaching and extension. This has allowed students to work at their own pace.
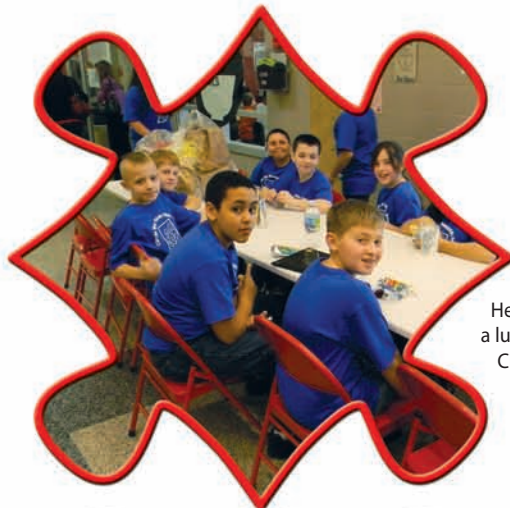
In Math classes, students are using either Acellus or ALEKS— self-paced software programs that target student's math abilities.

Mr. DeFries has this to say about ALEKS:

ALEKS is a math computer program that allows students to work at their own pace. They begin at a level that the teacher has chosen for them, but then they are able to move up or down according to their readiness. The students begin by taking a test to see how many of the skills they have already mastered for that level. ALEKS then gives them lessons that they are prepared for. This type of program is, of course, a great way to differentiate learning for students at different levels who are in the same classroom.

One of my favorite parts of ALEKS is that teachers have many more opportunities to give individual instruction to the students who need it most. As the students progress, they can look to see what they have mastered so far. They can also see what they are prepared to learn next. After students have mastered material, they will have to show that it has been retained by passing it again on a test. If a mastered skill is not passed on the test, it will need to be mastered again.

Lori Pavell – *Principal*

Elementary School News

If the current bill is passed, beginning in the 2011 - 2012 school year, promotion from third to fourth grade will be based on a student's ability to pass a Reading test called "IREAD - 3." If a student does not pass in their first attempt on the IREAD - 3 Exam, a second attempt during locally offered summer school could result in the student being promoted to the fourth grade. The rule provides three good cause exemptions for retention. Those include one for special education students, one for English Language Learners, and one for students who have been retained twice prior to fourth grade.

Another change on the horizon is the upcoming transition to the Common Core State Standards. One positive aspect is that when students move from different states, schools will be teaching the same standards. There should not be a major shift in programs which will make it better for students and teachers. In 2011 - 2012, kindergarten teachers will be the first to teach only the Common Core. Those kindergarten students will be the first class of 3rd graders to participate in the Common Core Assessment. (Replacing ISTEP). First grade and second grade students will learn Indiana Academic Standards and identified elements of Common Core in 2011 - 2012. First grade students will learn only Common Core in 2012 -2013. Second grade students will learn only Common Core in 2013 - 2014. The Common Core assessment includes a summative test, which will be administered online beginning with the 2014 - 2015 school year. The test also includes "through-course assessments" that take place over the course of the year, allowing teachers to adjust their instruction based on students' results. This year, our 5th and 8th grade students are taking the multiple-choice portion of ISTEP on the computer. Very soon, almost all of the state testing will be online.

I would also like to congratulate Miss Huber for being nominated by her colleagues as "Educator of the Year". This award is sponsored by the American Legion. Each Post will select a District winner and will enter their choice in the State Contest.

James Martin – *Principal*

Hebron students take a lunch break from their Circle the State with Song rehearsal.

MSD of Boone Township
Three Year District Technology Plan   2011-2014

MSD of Boone Twp. is moving toward a new vision and understanding of how technology can be used in the classroom and throughout the district. We have just concluded an extensive evaluation of our technology program both within the classroom and infrastructure to operate the servers, switches, computers, projectors, document cameras, interactive boards, iPods, ipads, etc. which are required by teachers today to differentiate instruction to increase student knowledge and master the processing skills of the 21st century: problem solving, communication, agility and adaptability, accessing and analyzing information, initiative, collaboration and curiosity/imagination.

The Metropolitan School District of Boone Township Board of School Trustees recently approved a $725,000.00 bond issue to purchase equipment and software to accomplish the following vision, mission and goals of the district's three-year technology plan. This action demonstrates the district's commitment to prepare our students for college, job training or employment.

VISION

All MSD Boone Twp. students function successfully in an ever changing world of technology.

MISSION

All students in the district will demonstrate proficiency in the 21st century process skills.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

1. The district's leadership and instructional staff implements and continuously evaluates a formal plan of technology integration.
2. The technology infrastructure supports the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.
3. All staff members model the use of technology.
4. Staff development is an essential component of technology implementation.
5. Technology is a tool for teaching and engages learning in all content areas.
6. Technology is integrated in all curricular areas.
7. Students demonstrate the following skills in the classroom using a variety of technology resources:
   - Communication
   - Problem Solving
   - Collaboration
   - Creativity and Innovation
8. Students and staff learn, understand, and demonstrate ethical responsibility in the use of technology.
9. Students and staff use technology and media services as instructional resources for learning.

GOALS

1. Technology skills and information literacy will be integrated in all content areas.
   Strategies:
   - District leadership will facilitate and model technology integration.
   - The systems resources will be prioritized and allocated to support district technology goals.
   - During the curriculum writing process for each content area, technology skills and information literacy will be embedded into each subject's standards and indicators.
   - Technology integration will be included in all professional development in each subject area as a tool for instruction and learning.
   - Students will demonstrate their learning through the use of technology.
   - Students will be instructed in the responsible and ethical use of technology.

OVER

- Instructional best practices will include the use of technology for learning and assessing.
- Full-time district wide technology personnel will provide training and support for technology integration.

Metrics:

- Staff performance and evaluation. (Yearly)
- Student learner outcomes. (Quarterly)
- The district technology committee will monitor and collect the data to measure the effectiveness of technology integration. (quarterly)
- Monitor the collection and use of the data provided by various technology assessment systems to drive instruction. (Quarterly)
- Monitoring the usage of technology tools for learning. (Bi-Annually)

2. Staff and student expectations will be clearly defined regarding the utilization of integrated technology.

Strategies:

- Teacher's goals and evaluations will include how the integration of technology will be demonstrated in the classroom.
- Technology expectations will be defined for each level.

Metrics:

- Teacher evaluation and professional growth plans. (Yearly)
- Monitor student use of technology. (Quarterly)
- Evaluate student performance in relation to learning objectives. (Yearly)

3. The use of technology supports the day to day operations of the system.

Strategies:

- The system's hardware and software is continuously evaluated and updated as needed.
- The technology department meets weekly to discuss and solve ongoing issues.
- Technology issues and initiatives are discussed at all levels and departments within the system.
- Technology decisions involve a range of stake holders including IT Department, teaching staff, administrators and students.
- District technology committee, representative of all buildings, acts in an advisory capacity to assess district needs and plan implementation of resources.
- Technical assistance is provided for all users.
- Training is provided for all current and newly implemented programs.
- Technology training is provided to all new staff members through the district and building based orientation.
- Communication with the community will be supported through technology initiatives.

Metrics:

- Monitoring usage of district communication tools. (Quarterly)
- District meetings and communications will be documented. (Monthly)
- District technology helpdesk system monitors hardware, software and training needs. (Bi-Monthly)
- Attendance and participation in technology training is documented. (Yearly)

George Letz – *Superintendent*