

## North Cow Creek 8-17-10

## Best STAR results ever and a \$15,000 Parent Club donation top the agenda

In front of a large crowd of interested staff members and parents, Superintendent Tom Mancuso on Aug. 17, 2010 presented the results from last spring's STAR test to the Governing Board for the North Cow Creek Elementary School District. The results showed the highest percentage of proficient and advanced students ever for North Cow Creek. For English Language Arts the percentage of students scoring in the top two categories is 71.6% (a 2.1% increase over last year). 76.6% of the students achieved the proficient or advanced level in mathematics (a 14% jump from last year).

Mancuso said, "The exceptional scores were the result of a dedicated staff and a great effort by our students." Staff members felt the second year of a new math program for grades second through sixth and the first year of a new math program for grades seven and eight made a huge difference for our math instruction. The English language arts jumped up due to new benchmark testing for grades two through eight and the school's intervention program.

The parent club made a \$15,000 donation to the school to cover the technol-

ogy budget for the year. The money originally budgeted for technology can now be used for staffing. The school board was very grateful for the donation and thanked Parent Club president Georgetta Fitzgerald, for their help.

Throughout the evening there was much discussion by the board, parents and staff members about the merits of the music program, small class sizes, making sure a teacher hired for the first semester can continue in the second semester and paraprofessional help in the classroom.

Mancuso explained there were still many unknown variables that will have an impact on these decisions once they are known. These variables include staff negotiations, federal relief money and a state budget. With only \$15,000 to work with at this time the board decided to bring back two part time paraprofessionals to help with classes and the intervention program.

During the superintendent's report Mancuso reported on the summer projects completed to prepare the school including painting, new carpets in two rooms, plumbing repair, A/C maintenance and grounds work. The staff did an excellent job preparing for the start of a new

school year.

On the first day of school a free pancake breakfast was hosted by the parent club. Even though the kitchen stove did not work that morning the parents were able to scramble using the staff kitchen and electric griddles to have everyone fed by 8:15.

The new lunch program is up and running. Students have enjoyed the first two days of entrees. Getting the last minute orders in has created some delays but once the kinks are worked out, this will be an excellent lunch program for our families.

The board also accepted the resignation of board member Kent Steffans. Steffans has moved his family to Weaverville to be closer to his work. The board will appoint a replacement to complete Steffans' term which ends in December of 2011. Interested residents of the North Cow Creek school district must submit a letter of interest to Superintendent Mancuso by Friday, September 3. The board will interview candidates during the regular board meeting on September 21 and will make an appointment during that same meeting.

The next regular board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 21 at 7:00 in the library.

## Junction 8-24-10

## New principal, new superintendent, new school year

Both of Junction School District's administrators had nothing but good to say to the Governing Board about the staff and the start of school at their meeting on Aug. 24, 2010. New Principal Jim Boesiger said he continues to be impressed by how much time the staff puts in getting ready for the arrival of the children on the first day of school. He also said that he had invited Junction alumni Jeff Engle and Dean Franks to talk to the teachers about the history of the school at their luncheon at Goodtimes Pizza, something they all really enjoyed.

New Superintendent Biff Barnes said that Junc-

tion's opening day was "as good as I've ever seen." He praised maintenance supervisor Johnny Sylvester for how great the campus looks. He said he had walked around with bond campaign advisor John Isom trying to find things that needed fixing, but they couldn't find anything to photograph. Barnes also had high praise for first year principal Boesiger. "The Board made a good choice when they hired him," Barnes said. "He's better than he knows."

The Board ratified the hiring of three additional part time teachers: Kaela Kunde will teach seventh and eighth grade math; Tri-

na Harvey will teach at the elementary campus; and Jim Wilson will teach sixth and seventh grade PE.

Barnes went over with the Board an analysis of three years' worth of STAR test scores, which he said showed "substantial growth from year to year" and should be a "cause for celebration and congratulations to the teaching staff." He noted that in Language Arts Junction students had showed an average yearly progress of 13.2 percent, with some grades improving their scores by 19 and 20 percent. Math scores also increased by an average of 9.7 percent, with a jump of 19 percent at eighth grade.

After the Board reviewed a letter from the Shasta County Office of Education advising caution in spending due to the instability in state funding, Barnes said he had just today gotten a reminder why having a sound budget with substantial reserves is so important for school districts: on the news he had learned that the state was planning to defer their July payments to schools until September, and in that interim districts must use their own reserves to meet their payroll. He said he was very grateful to Business Manager Mindy Whitman and former Superintendent Mary Sakuma for creating Junction's "well-conceived budget for us to work with."

## Millville 8-17-10

## Millville's STAR test scores show impressive growth

The number of Millville Elementary School students scoring proficient and above on the California Standardized Tests (CST) taken in the spring of 2010 for both math and language has increased, reported Millville's Superintendent/Principal Mindy DeSantis at the school's regular board meeting on August 17, 2010.

Over 80 percent of students in second through eighth grade scored proficient or advanced on the CST for English/Language Arts. In second grade alone, 92 percent of the students scored proficient or advanced; fifth and eighth grade also saw 92 percent of the students scoring proficient or advanced in English/Language Arts.

In math the numbers were equally as impressive. Again over 80 percent of students in second through seventh grades scored proficient or advanced on the CSTs. The second grade class saw 100 percent of its

students scoring proficient or advanced. In algebra, the numbers were consistent with 84 percent of students scoring proficient or above.

DeSantis reminded the board and the audience that the expectations set by "No Child Left Behind" are that 100 percent of all students will score proficient or above by the year 2014. The state-wide requirements for the 2009-2010 school year is that 56.8 percent of all students in grades K-8 must score proficient or advanced in English/Language Arts and 48 percent of all students in grades K-8 must score proficient or advanced in math. "With over 80 percent of our students scoring proficient or above in both math and language arts, Millville is well above the current year's NCLB achievement expectations," DeSantis stated.

Millville's parent group, Parents and Teachers for Kids

(PTK), reported the grant they wrote for SMART boards had been awarded by the McConnell Community Foundation for \$18,000.00. Wanting to equip the entire school with SMART boards, the school board approved spending up to \$25,000 to complement the McConnell grant and allow SMART boards to be installed in every classroom.

On other topics, the board reviewed enrollment figures anticipated for the first day of school. The enrollment for kindergarten through eighth grade was expected to be at 247 students on the first day of school. The seventh grade class alone has over 40 students. Due to this large number the board voted to hire a temporary seventh grade teacher. The new teacher will allow the school to try new variations on class configurations such as a single-sex class and a class dedicated to challenging high achieving students.

## Oak Run 8-23-10

## Board holds first meeting with new superintendent

Oak Run Elementary School District's Governing Board held its first meeting with its new superintendent/principal Larry Robins on Aug. 23, 2010. Robins comes to Oak Run from the Happy Valley Union School District near Anderson.

The Board discussed and then approved a contract with the Glenn County Office of Education which performs the paperwork involved with Medical Administrative Activities (MAA) for numerous north state school districts.

The Trustees also approved a contract with Infinity Communications, which is taking over administration of the e-rate program from the Shasta Union High School District. Under the e-rate program the federal government reimburses schools for the cost of internet connectivity and also for additional essential infrastructure. Robins said he had already looked over the school's technology plan and will begin working on an upgrade immediately

so it can be in by the November deadline for funding.

The Oak Run Teachers Association presented its initial proposal for negotiations for the upcoming school year. They are asking that the District pay full benefits and a full year's credit for retirement for its half-time teacher; they are also asking for detailed description of duties for the lead teacher position.

The classified staff at the school is in the process of deciding whether or not to decertify from the California State Employees Association which has represented them in years past. Two of the three classified employees are in favor of the decertification, while one is not.



Chrysalis students and parents take a ride in a raft down the Sacramento River.

## Chrysalis rafts Sacramento

No better way for a science and nature school to begin the year than by rafting the Sacramento River. On August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, Chrysalis Charter School in Palo Cedro went rafting with their students, kindergarten through eighth grade. "Beginning the year with a raft trip helps integrate new families into Chrysalis and gives them a first experience of how we've used the creative freedom of our charter to create a different kind of public school," said Paul Krafel, school administrator.

A third of the 215 adventurers were parents, some of whom had never gone rafting before. Students, parents, and teachers learned to work, row, and exult together. They saw deer, geese, mergansers, eagles, osprey, turkeys, and otter. Students experienced the ever-changing connection between a river's depth, width and speed and how an increase in one variable requires that one or both of the other variables must decrease.

Because the school is growing as word of mouth spreads, they had to make three trips this year rather than the two trips they've done in the past. However, this created the opportunity to take the sixth through eighth grade students rafting on the more rural and challenging stretch below Anderson River Park.

The school thanks the Shasta County Sheriff's Department's boat that stood ready as the rafts took on the most challenging stretches of whitewater. The school also thanks the North Country Raft Rental who works with Chrysalis each year to make these special trips possible.

In mid-September, the school will go on a three-night camping trip to the coast.

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