

Through Tiger's Eyes

*Delano High School's Family Newsletter
October/November 2011*

School Improvement: One Step at a Time

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all students, parents and staff back to another academically challenging and engaging school year where we continue to provide a world class high school education to prepare our students for the next educational step in their career. ***Please take the time to read the contents of this newsletter as it contains vital information regarding your son or daughter's academic career at Delano High School.***

The Journey Continues

Over the past several years I have been communicating with you regarding our journey of preparing our students to be college and career ready when they graduate from high school. We are in the third year of a three to five year plan to improve our overall ACT test scores and to increase the percentage of students that are college and career ready based on the four major areas assessed by our ACT testing schedule. These four areas are composition/English, Reading, Mathematics and Science. I am happy to report that Delano High School has consistently averaged higher than the MN state average over the past five years. Utilizing ACT information gives us the opportunity to seek out areas for growth regarding specific skills required of all students after they graduate high school. As you well know, Delano High School has consistently achieved in the top five percent of state high schools regarding the MN Comprehensive Assessments taken by all high school students in order to graduate. Now we need to make sure that our students are completely ready for the next step.

Our Plan

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the results of the 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan. In summary, we had six major goals; five of them involved academic excellence and one involved using resources effectively. The five academic goals consisted of S.M.A.R.T. goals, which mean that they are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and include a specific time frame. The first goal involved the building Q-Comp goal, which stated that we needed to achieve 87.7 percent proficiency on our reading scores as measured by the MCA II reading test. I am happy to report that the sophomore students achieved over 90% proficiency on this test last spring. Not many high schools can boast a 90% plus proficiency rate at the high school level. Congratulations to our talented educators and students at Delano High School! We facilitated the same goal in mathematics but came up a bit short of our measured goal. We continue to work in this area to demonstrate measured improvement.

Our third goal involved a writing goal, specifically in the ninth grade year. All ninth grade students are required to take the MCA writing test in April each year. We have challenged ourselves with a stretch goal to achieve a 100% passage rate on this assessment with an average score of 4.1 on a scale of 1-6. Realizing that this is an aggressive goal, we did fall short with only a 95% passage rate and a 3.8 average score (passing score is 3.0). The fourth high school goal involved science. Based on previous years test scores, we wanted a 2% increase with the proficiency rate. We not only achieved this goal but increased the proficiency rate by over 3%. The fifth academic goal involved a gradual increase on ACT scores over the next three to five years, as I mentioned in the first paragraph.

The final goal involved utilizing Skyward Family Access in a more efficient manner to communicate with our parent and student community. One major change that was implemented is that when you log into Family Access, you see a calendar on the first page. Teachers are now required to post all major assignments, tests and quizzes one week in advance in order to assist students and parents in being proactive in preparation and completion of said tasks. You will also receive emails from some teachers regarding important progress reports and other vital educational information that you should be aware of as a parent.

We hope you found this information enlightening and encouraging as the journey continues. Welcome Back!

-Matthew Schoen, Principal

State Test Results Are In - How Did DHS Do?

The results for the MCA II tests in Math and Reading are in, as well as the required GRAD tests in Math, Reading and Writing. We also received information regarding the students who did not pass these required state tests. Due to the government shutdown, the summary data and state comparison information, along with the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) information is not yet available.

First, the Graduation Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) are the state required tests embedded within the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) given in April of each year. In order to be eligible for a high school diploma, students are required to pass each the writing and reading test, and either pass the math exam or attempt to pass it three times. Delano has prided itself for several years on achieving great results on these tests. This year, two of the three tests saw gains in students passing on their first attempt.

GRAD Passage Rate on First Attempt

| GRAD Exam | 2011 | 2010 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Writing (Grade 9) | 95% | 98.5% |
| Reading (Grade 10) | 89.4% | 87.4% |
| Math (Grade 11) | 77.8% | 75% |

Students, who did not pass the reading or math exams, were notified during the summer and were offered an opportunity to re-take the test and pass. Currently, we have 27 students in grades 11 and 12 who need to pass the reading exam, 26 students who haven't passed the math exam, and 15 who need to pass the writing exam. Efforts are being made to maximize the number of students who earn a passing score by the end of the 2011-12 school year.

Next, the MCA II tests are given to all students to evaluate their knowledge of the state standards in the areas of math

and reading. These exams give student results at four different achievement levels: Exceeds (E), Meets (M), Partially Meets (P), and Does Not Meet (D). These tests also fulfill the states AYP requirements of the Federal Government. The federal guidelines further identify students as being Proficient (meeting or exceeding standards) or Not Proficient (partially meeting or does not meet standards).

As you look at the tables below, although the number of students in the "Exceeds" category dropped, the overall percentage of students proficiency increased. In addition, the math table shows an increase in both the "Exceeds" category and the "Proficiency" rating in comparison to 2010.

| Reading MCA-II | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|---------|
| | Not Proficient | | Proficient | |
| | Does Not Meet | Partially Meets | Meets | Exceeds |
| 2010 | 6.1 | 7.9 | 30.5 | 55.5 |
| 2011 | 4.6 | 7.6 | 43.7 | 44.2 |

| Math MCA-II | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|---------|
| | Not Proficient | | Proficient | |
| | Does Not Meet | Partially Meets | Meets | Exceeds |
| 2010 | 14.5 | 20 | 34 | 31.5 |
| 2011 | 16.1 | 17.4 | 29.8 | 36.6 |

If you have any questions regarding MCA II testing or AYP results, please contact Joe Vieau, HS Assistant Principal, at jvieau@delano.k12.mn.us.

Sport and Energy Drinks vs. Water - Which is Best?

Don't believe the hype about sports drinks and energy drinks optimizing athletic performance. Water is still the best choice for children and adolescents, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), in a clinical report that was released this year.



The AAP Committee on Nutrition and Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness developed a report on the clinical implications of overuse of sports and energy drinks as guidance for pediatric health care providers. Sports drinks and energy drinks are significantly different products, says the AAP. Sports drinks contain carbohydrates, minerals, electrolytes, and flavoring and are intended to replace water and electrolytes lost through sweating while exercising. Energy drinks contain stimulants including caffeine and guarana, protein, amino acids, vitamins,

sodium, and minerals, and advertise performance-enhancing effects. The high amounts of caffeine energy drinks contain, exceed levels high enough to cause toxicity. For the average adolescent participating in routine physical activity, water and/or low-fat milk are the best choices.

The AAP also noted that the marketed effects of specific amino acids and proteins contained in sports and energy drinks for post exercise recovery were not supported by clinical trials. An adolescents best source for hydration is still H2O!

Information taken from Contemporary Pediatrics, an Advanstar Communications publication.

Counselor's Corner

Parent-School Collaboration

Collaborating with your student's school, with the goal of improving your child's educational experiences and achievements is extremely important to get them ready for life after high school.

The word "collaborate" originally comes from Latin, meaning labor together or work together. We encourage you to take advantage of the school guidance counselor, the principals, teachers and other administration personnel to improve your child's educational experiences and achievements.

The school counselor at Delano High School offers some of the following activities to facilitate parent-school collaboration:

- Assessment results interpretation for parents.
- Resource referral information for parents.
- Exploration of college/career options with parents and students.

During the month of October, meetings will be held with each senior and his/her parent(s) to prepare for graduation and post secondary plans. Look for your letter in the mail!

- Invitations to parents for one-on-one conferences.
- Parent information night.
- Academic planning programs for parents and students.

Fortunately, the payoff to getting involved in your child's school is significant. Research shows that parental involvement and

collaboration with schools help children perform better academically. When parents work with school personnel and counselors, their children fair better achieving A's and B's, and fewer lower grades. When parents work with schools, their children tend to have a greater social adjustment.

In the long run, the role you play in your child's education will prove to be a labor of love that we call parent-school collaboration.

-Susan Farbo, Guidance Counselor

Delano Welcomes Sister School Staff and Students from Tanguu, China



This past week, Delano Public Schools hosted visitors from our sister school, Zi Yun High School in Tanguu, China. Fourteen students and six staff members learned about Delano schools and Minnesota. As this was the first time the China students and staff have visited the United States, the DHS student host families and Delano staff members exposed them to public education in America, sights in and around Delano, Homecoming Week, along with many more "American" experiences.

To see an interview with our China Visitors and Superintendent Dr. John Sweet, go to *Tiger Tales*, on the front page of the Delano Public Schools website at www.delano.k12.mn.us, and click on the video.

DHS Welcomes New Staff Members!



Sharon Alexander
Speech Pathologist



Jacob Dorsey
Special Education Teacher
WEH Coordinator



Joe Lawrence
Language Arts Teacher



Anna Olson
Mathematics Teacher

**DHS Theater Department
Presents...**



The Delano High School drama department will be presenting *Circus Olympus*, a rollicking spoof of several well known Greek myths such as King Midas and the Golden Torch, Pandora's Box, and the Arachne and Athena. 24 students grades 9-12 will perform and leading the cast are seniors Nick Meyerson, Ben Nolan, Ben Farniok, Josh Lawman and Evan Lemmerman. This is a fast moving play that will be enjoyed by all ages!

Circus Olympus will be performed in the Delano Middle School auditorium on Thursday, November 3 and Friday, November 4 at 7:00 p.m., along with Saturday, November 5 at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available at the door.

Interested in Volunteering at DHS?

Visit the Delano Public Schools website at www.delano.k12.mn.us, mouse over high school and click on "Volunteering" under School Services.

Just follow the instructions and you will be registered to volunteer for the 2011-12 school year. We appreciate all of our volunteers!

Flu Shot Clinic

When: Monday, October 3, 2011, 4-7 p.m.

Where: Delano High School Cafeteria

Who: Ages 3 years old and up

There are 17 major insurance plans accepted as well as personal checks. Please bring your insurance card and a picture ID. Also wear clothing that allows easy access to the upper arm. The cost is as follows:

- Flu Shots \$27.00
- Flu Mist \$32.00
- Pneumonia \$57.00

This is provided by qualified, professional, Registered Nurses from the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Agency.

October Calendar

- 3 HS Conferences 4:30-8 pm
- 4-5 National College Fair for Juniors
- 10 HS P.I.E. Meeting 6 pm
- 11 HS Site Base Meeting 7:15 am
- HS Picture Retake Day
- 20-21 MEA - **NO SCHOOL**
- 24 School Board Meeting 7 pm
- 27 HS Band & Choir Concert 7 pm
- HS Gym

November Calendar

- 3 HS Fall Play 7 pm
- 4 HS Fall Play 7 pm
- HS End of Quarter 1
- 5 HS Fall Play 1 pm
- 7 Teacher Workshops - **NO SCHOOL**
- HS Math Meet
- 8 HS Site Base Meeting 7:15 am
- Remember to Vote!**
- 11 Veteran's Day Program 9:30 am
- Tiger Activity Center
- 14 HS P.I.E. Meeting 6 pm
- 23-25 Thanksgiving Holiday - **NO SCHOOL**
- 28 HS Math Meet
- School Board Meeting 7 pm

To take a peek at what is happening at DHS, click on the home page of the High School on our website.

You can read about and see pictures of several events that your students may be involved in!

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