



Eye of the Tiger

District 879 Newsletter March 2022

At a glance

Page 2

State science champs
Supt. message

Page 3

Kindergarten roundup
All-State Orchestra
2022-23 calendar

Page 4

Pavlovich retires

Dates to remember

March

14.....HS PIE meeting, 6 p.m.
16.....Two-hour late start
21...School board mtg., 5:45 p.m.
24.....Grade 2 concert
25.....End of Quarter 3
28-31....Spring break, no school

April

1.....Spring break, no school
9...Prom, grand march at 5 p.m.
11.....HS PIE meeting, 6 p.m.
11.....Kindergarten Roundup
(families with last name A-K)
12.....Kindergarten Roundup
(families with last name L-Z)
15.....Good Friday, no school
20.....Two-hour late start
25...School board mtg., 5:45 p.m.



Merrill Pavlovich retired this winter after 46 years as the head football coach in Delano. He has the fifth-most wins in state history. See Page 4.



Ashley Johnson, who teaches English Language Learners from kindergarten through high school, has been named the Delano Teacher of the Year.

Teacher of the Year

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

Nothing is more foundational to learning than the ability to communicate, so it is fitting that English Language Learner instructor Ashley Johnson has been named Teacher of the Year for Delano Public Schools.

Johnson serves roughly 40 students from kindergarten through high school, spending time at

all three schools on a regular basis. Her students come from a variety of backgrounds and speak Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Spanish, Hmong, French and Thai.

"Ashley continually looks for ways to support her students," said a nomination submitted by DHS language arts teacher Rachel Holmes. "She

See Johnson
Page 3

An unwavering focus on learning

By Matthew Schoen
Superintendent

I write this article with cautious optimism, having very little to say about the pandemic. My hope is that we have moved beyond this difficult time period, and we can continue to focus our efforts to educational success for all our students.

That said, I am proud to share that we have been working diligently this school year to improve our programming and our practices in the classroom to increase the level of student achievement in regard to our academic standards.

See Schoen
Page 2



Science Olympiad excels at state

Delano takes first place in Small School Division

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

Delano's Science Olympiad team took first place in the nine-team Small Schools Division at the state tournament on Saturday, March 5, at Bethel University.

The Tigers also finished seventh out of 31 teams overall, just behind Minnetonka and ahead of Bloomington Kennedy.

"I'm very proud of our team this season," said DHS science teacher and co-coach Karen Hohenstein. "We have finished well in the small school division in the past, but to finish in the top 10 overall against such large high schools is quite an accomplishment."

Those team results carried on a strong run at state in recent years, including a first-place finish in 2019 before COVID interruptions, and third-place finishes in 2018 and 2017.

Delano's medal winners included Zachary Hemmesch and Sydney Kazin (second place in Trajectory), Camp-



Delano Science Olympiad members took first among small schools, and seventh out of 31 teams overall.

bell Logan and Lexi Semeizer (second in Rocks & Minerals and third in Chemistry Lab), and Noah Hemmesch and Bryce Prior (third in Detector Building).

"Individually, team members have worked hard and it has paid off," said Hohenstein. "This is the first time in team history that we have earned medals in four different events at the state tournament."

About the competition

A total of 35 Delano students took part in Science Olympiad this year, with participants splitting up into A, B and C teams. Only 15 students were allowed to compete at state.

"We didn't do it last year because of COVID, but the last few years before that we had some pretty big teams," said

Stephen Schaack, DHS science teacher and co-coach along with Hohenstein. "This year most of our C team and some of our B team kids were freshmen trying it for the first time, and we had a lot of juniors who did it for the first time two years ago. So it's a big team and a lot of kids are really excited about doing it."

In Science Olympiad students work with partners in a variety of events that encompass many branches of science. Some events include tests on anatomy, rocks and minerals, chemistry and astronomy. There is also a "codebusters" event, "disease detective," "experimental design," "remote sensing," and "ping pong parachute."

At tournaments students can earn gold, silver and bronze medals for excelling in their categories. The season runs from November through March.

• *This is an abridged version of a feature story available at www.delano.k12.mn.us. See the district website for more.*

Schoen

from Page 1

Two major pillars of our strategic plan are Curriculum and Professional Development. This year our Curriculum work plan includes two primary goals. The first is to refine our district multi-tiered support system (MTSS) to specifically track student data. This will drive early interventions in the classroom when students begin to struggle academically.

To achieve this, a district team made up of educators, administrators and academic interventionists have started a cohort with the Minnesota Department of Education that will last through the end of the school year. The purpose of this cohort is to establish a district-wide system of support for classroom teachers that will initiate interventions before any type of referral to a more structured education plan is needed. The idea is to catch our learners

sooner when they begin to struggle, and to implement interventions that will catch the student up before they fall too far behind.

The second goal under our Curriculum work plan is to implement new state standards in the areas of science and art. This process includes a research, design and implementation process in order for our educators to place these standards in their curriculum.

The second major district aim under Professional Development is to provide our educators with the opportunity to continue their work in their "professional learning communities." These groups consist of approximately eight teachers each, who meet regularly throughout the school year and discuss student achievement, based on actual student work. These discussions will inform

their classroom approach and ensure the most effective teaching in regard to the academic standards.

These professional learning communities are the core of our professional development, and ultimately exist for the system-wide success of all students. Throughout the course of this school year our educators have received multiple training opportunities to support their professional learning community work. This training is aligned with best literacy practices.

I am very excited to focus our attention on educational excellence, even in the midst of what has been yet another challenging year due to the pandemic. Know that Delano Public Schools and its talented staff have never wavered from our vision of educational excellence for every learner, even in less than ideal circumstances.

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and its talented staff
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educational excellence
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Kindergarten Roundup

Families invited to DES on April 11 and 12

Delano Elementary School invites you to attend Kindergarten Roundup on Monday, April 11, or Tuesday, April 12, if you have children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2022.

Families with last names beginning with A through K should come on Monday, and families with last names beginning with L through Z should come on Tuesday.

If you have a conflict on your assigned evening, please come on the alternate evening.

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. At 6 p.m. children will remain in the kindergarten classrooms, and parents/



guardians will move to the cafeteria for an information session with the principal and dean of students. This session will conclude at about 6:45 p.m.

In order to make this a special evening for you and

your child, please make childcare arrangements for other siblings.

If you have not received a kindergarten registration packet, or if you are new to the area, contact Delano Elementary School at 763-972-6200.

School calendar set for 2022-23

Delano School Board members approved the 2023 calendar during their Feb. 28 board meeting. Highlights include:

- A start date of Tuesday, Sept. 6, after Labor Day.
- Thanksgiving break of Nov. 23-25.
- Winter break of Dec. 22-Dec. 30.
- Spring break of April 3-7.
- An end date of June 2.

See the complete calendar at www.delano.k12.mn.us.

Johnson

from Page 1

works to provide her students with skills that will help them beyond the school walls. She manages a variety of skill levels and accommodates to the ever-changing schedule of adding new students. She is such a valuable asset to our district and our students."

Each year a handful of teachers are nominated, and the entire district teaching staff votes on a winner. Johnson said the recognition was a surprise.

"I feel very humbled, but also undeserving because of

everyone else who should be getting it," she said. "With how difficult things have been in the last three years, this feels like a reward that every teacher deserves. I'm the lucky one. I feel so lucky to work with a staff that is so dedicated to their profession and to my students and my program."

Relationships first

Learning a new language requires students to take risks, which can be a challenge if they aren't feeling comfortable in their surroundings. As a result, Johnson strives to learn some aspect of their native language to build rapport, and makes sure to incorporate

some humor into her lessons.

"I have a ton of fun with my newcomers. Those are some of my most challenging days, but also some of the most rewarding," she said.

As relationships are established, learning follows.

"You start with some of those things that almost seem like kindergarten basics and go from there," said Johnson. "At the end of the day I just want to make sure I fulfill all the needs of my students. Whether that's academic, linguistic, social-emotional or any other need they may have, I just want to make sure that I am there for them."

When not in the classroom, Johnson enjoys traveling the world to new and unfamiliar places. She also leads groups of Delano students on national and international ventures.

"If I could spend every weekend on an airplane to somewhere new and uncomfortable for me, pushing myself, that would be my dream," she said with a laugh.

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Johnson makes a point to build strong relationships with her students, which helps facilitate learning.



Karson Trujillo

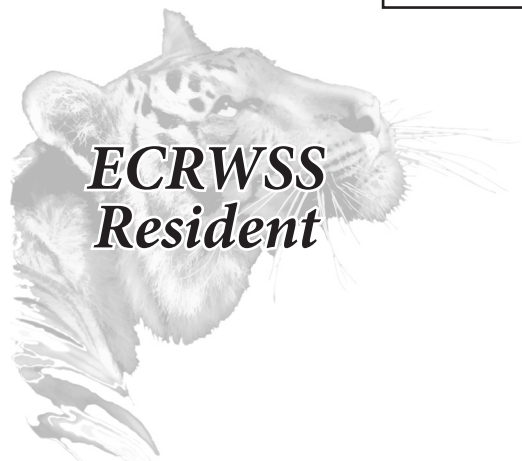
Trujillo plays with All-State Orchestra

One of the top young trumpet players in Minnesota represented Delano during a concert by the All-State Orchestra at Orchestra Hall in St. Paul on Saturday, Feb. 19.

Senior Karson Trujillo, who last year qualified for the All-State Concert Band, was one of only three trumpet players selected to the orchestra ensemble. As far as is known, he is also just the second Delano musician chosen for the group after clarinetist Maddie Meland in 2020.

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*Systemic growth toward educational
excellence for every learner*

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‘Pav’ steps down after Hall of Fame career

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

The man who led three generations of Delano football players onto the field, instilling in them the values of discipline and respect regardless of outcome – but winning two out of every three games along the way – is hanging up his whistle.

“I think I’ve still got a little spunk left in me, but it’s just time to move on, said Merrill Pavlovich.

Over 46 years, “Pav” amassed 315 wins, the fifth-most in Minnesota high school history. He was inducted into the Minnesota Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2011, and guided Delano teams to 15 conference titles and 12 state tournament appearances. He was also named Conference Coach of the Year nine times, and Section Coach of the Year nine times.

“I’m not big on records and wins and losses. I’ve always viewed coaching football as something I’ve really enjoyed, something I look forward to,” said Pavlovich, 74. “My rule of thumb was if I got up in the morning and I didn’t want to



Merrill Pavlovich retired this winter after 46 years at the helm of the Delano football program. During that time he tallied the fifth-most wins in state high school history.

‘Pav was respect by fans and competitors alike as a hard-driving and formidable opponent.’

Ted May

go to practice, then I was hurting the program. In December I think that time arrived.”

Former Delano Activities Director Mike Lindquist said Pavlovich was well known around the region and state for his success on the field, as well as his focus on his players.

“He bled orange and black,” said Lindquist. “He had a reputation as a really good football coach and an advocate for student-athletes in Minnesota.”

Former Delano High School Principal Theodore May said that Pavlovich made the football field an extension of the



Pavlovich at his Hall of Fame induction in 2011.

classroom, where lessons were taught beyond the realm of academics.

“Pav was respected by fans and competitors alike as a hard-driving and formidable opponent,” May said. “During his tenure at DHS, records were made, victory and defeat were growth opportunities, and proud traditions were established. Those traditions will now become inspirations for future students and athletes.”

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