

TIGER TRACKS

Delano Middle School Newsletter



March 2018



Three fifth-graders won the middle school Battle of the Books. See page 4.

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Dates to remember

March

- 12.....MS PIE, 6 p.m.
- 12....Incoming 7th grade parent/
student meeting 6:30 p.m.
- 12....Incoming 8th grade parent/
student meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 13.....District PIE, 7 p.m.
- 20..Anxiety workshop, 6:30 p.m.
- 30.....Spring break, no school



Alex Mika and Hunter Elwood test out their hovercraft during a recent Science Olympiad practice day. Tightly wound cords powered small fans for lift and propulsion.

Scientific resurgence

Participation rises in Olympiad competition

By Paul Downer

Communications Coordinator

After becoming a state powerhouse in the Science Olympiad, during which the Tigers made it to nationals six times in 15 years, Delano had a few lean years in terms of participation. But this year the numbers are back up, and the future is looking bright.

"We had eight kids the past four years. This year we have 35," said DHS science teacher Stephen Schaack, who oversees the Division B group that includes students in grades seven through nine. "This year

'It gives them that camaraderie like a sports team does, but it's academic rather than athletic.'

Stephen Schaack

it has exploded and we're not sure why."

The Science Olympiad is a competition against other schools in which students work with partners in a variety of events that encompass many branches of science.

Some events include tests on anatomy, rocks and minerals. Another category involves building a hovercraft. An optics competition involves directing a laser beam through a maze of obstacles using mirrors.

Another unique competition involves building a balsam wood tower that can hold the most weight possible.

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

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District among nation's best

New study places Delano in top 3 percent in U.S.

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

A recent survey has determined that Delano Public Schools ranks among the top 3 percent of school districts in the United States.

The National Council for Home Safety and Security evaluated 9,577 school districts to develop its Best School Districts in America list, and Delano was ranked 345th overall. A total of 26 districts from Minnesota were included in the top 500, and among those Minnesota districts Delano was No. 13.

To compile its rankings, the home security trade association that advocates for safe communities and community involvement used four criteria: student



performance measured by math and reading tests, school funding, poverty rate and dropout rate.

In regard to student performance, the report noted that strong districts can benefit all students, regardless of where they fall on the grade scale.

"Enrolling your child in a school where

students perform well on tests and get good grades will increase his or her own achievement through osmosis," the report noted. "Children and teenagers are highly influenced by their peer groups, and competition between students to achieve top marks can be a very good thing."

The ranking adds to a banner year for Delano Public Schools, which was ranked No. 9 in Minnesota by SchoolDigger.com last August, and which was one of just seven Minnesota school districts honored by The College Board with placement on the 8th Annual AP District Honor Roll in December.

For complete results and further explanation of the methods used in the rankings, see www.alarms.org/best-school-districts-in-america-2018/.

Junie B. Jones Jr.



Students in grades 4-7 performed the musical 'Junie B. Jones Jr.' Feb. 22-24. The show focused on the life and thoughts of the popular fictional first-grader.



Organics recycling begins

In an ongoing effort to be good stewards of the environment, Delano High School and Delano Middle School began organics recycling last month.

"As a school we should be teaching many different things, and one of those is sustainability in our resources," said DHS Principal Steve Heil, adding that organic recycling has already been implemented at the elementary school. "This is just another step to make sure we're teaching kids to do the right thing environmentally."

'This is just another step to make sure we're teaching kids to do the right thing environmentally.'

Dr. Steve Heil

Items that can be organically recycled are those that are bio-degradable, such as food scraps. The waste is taken to a facility where natural gas is extracted from the rotting organics, and the compost pile is turned over until the items turn to soil that can be re-used as fertilizer.

Heil guessed that a large proportion of the waste currently generated at the secondary school can be recycled.

"When I talked to other schools they said that if you could get all the recyclables and organic recyclables, that's usually about three quarters of the garbage at a school," he said.

Shortly after beginning organic recycling, Heil said students have responded well.

"It's an educational process about what organic recycling is, what regular recycling is and what is garbage," he said.



Masters of math

The DMS sixth-grade Math Masters team took first place in its competition on Thursday, March 1. Members of the team include Isaac Jacobson, Megan Westberg, Meredith Duis, Erica Kazin, Logan Felknor, Sidney Schmitt, Owen Stowman, Nathan Schneider, Haley Champeau, Ben Redinger, Grace Danielson, Isaac Rou-su, Sammy Knight, Ben Nellis and Faith Tellers.

Excelling in transition

Buildings evolving, students maturing

By Barry Voight
Principal

Greetings, Middle School Tigers.

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this newsletter article. We've reached the heart of the school year. The weather is warming, and while the snow will most likely continue for a month or so, spring is right around the corner.

Our students have enjoyed cheering on their high school counterparts as they reach the playoff segments of their winter seasons. Excitement is also building for spring activities to come. In the three years I've served as principal of Delano Middle School, the sense of community, support and participation offered throughout our system is a source of pride in our district.

This year, the enthusiasm for our normal operations continues while, at the same time, we anticipate the changes to come. Our communi-



Barry Voight

ty can be proud that DMS staff members have engaged themselves in the transitional process as we look ahead at creating a new future within a 7-12 high school and a 4-6 intermediate school.

Both of these arrangements offer exciting new challenges and opportunities. Throughout all of the planning efforts, I have been impressed with the degree to which our teachers,

support staff and parents have worked together to continue our tradition of excellence. We continue to seek opportunities to improve our ability to provide a high-quality, holistic educational experience for our students.

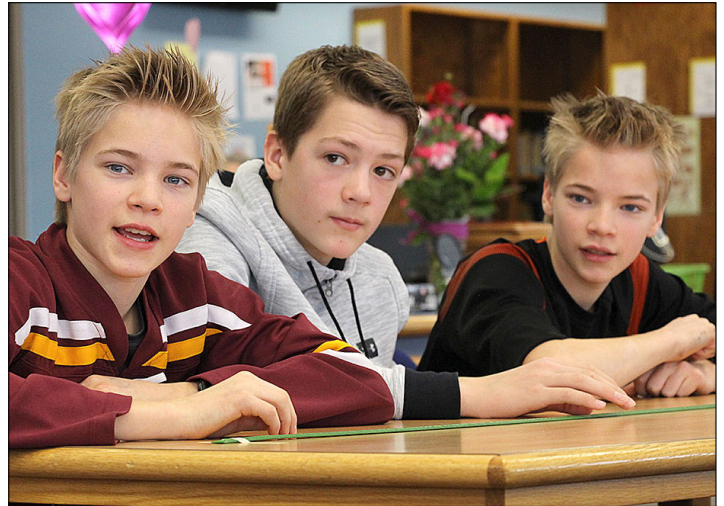
In addition to the physical environment evolving around us, our students continue to mature as well. All parents of middle schoolers can attest to the developmentally challenging age of our students. The student you sent to the middle school in September is likely very different than the one you have now. While they are older and perhaps more responsible now as they've matured, our students continue to need the support and guidance parents and educators provide.

Don't hesitate to reach out to our staff as we work together to help them advocate for themselves and support their academic, social and emotional growth. We will do the same!

Battle of the Books



Above, the second-place team included Owen Dickhausen, Peter Depa and Isaac Jacobson. At right, members of the third-place team were Justin Zens, Jackson Stewart and Caden Zens.



Familiar champs in book battle

By Paul Downer

Communications Coordinator

Joey Lamecker and Drew Nielsen were members of the fourth-grade team that won the Battle of the Books at the elementary school last year, so perhaps it should not be surprising that they carried that success on to the middle school level.

Lamecker and Nielsen were joined by Grant Forliti this year, and the trio of fifth-graders swept to the championship title in their first middle school Battle of the Books on Thursday, Feb. 15. How did it feel to repeat as winners in a new school this year?

"Awesome," said Nielsen.

Did they think they had a chance against older competition?

"Last year me and Drew won, so that helped our confidence a little bit," said Lamecker, with Nielsen adding that he had hoped to advance through the preliminaries to the semifinals, but didn't necessarily expect to be one of three teams vying for the title.

The ending turned out better than he had hoped, but the team earned their success. There were 22 total teams in



From left, fifth-graders Joey Lamecker, Drew Nielsen and Grant Forliti took first place in this year's battle.

the middle school competition, and a range of questions covered 12 books.

"Joey and I read every book," said Nielsen.

"I think I read them three times each, and a couple of them four times," said Lamecker.

Forliti said his favorite book on the list was "Bridge to Terabithia" by Katherine Paterson.

"It was just a nice book and I liked the imagination," he said.

Nielsen said his favorite was "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" by J.K. Rowling "because I'm a big sci fi fantasy and fantasy fan," and Lamecker's favorite work was "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry.

"I love learning about World War II," Lamecker said. "I have an entire shelf of just World

War II books at my house."

Aside from some diligent study, the group excelled because of their quick reactions. Their strategy was to buzz in

'It just gives you an excuse to read all these different kinds of books.'

Grant Forliti

first, then use the 15 seconds allotted to form their response. As for what they enjoyed most about the competition, Nielsen said it was the "thrilling feeling" of moving on through the rounds.

"I like just working with a team," said Lamecker. "When you move on to the next level so much relief just goes through your body."

Forliti said his favorite part of participating in his first Battle of the Books competition, which aims to get students excited about reading and introduce new genres, was the subject matter.

"It just gives you an excuse to read all these different kinds of books," he said.

Citizens of the Month

Citizens of the Month for January were recently announced. These students took being positive, prepared and academically driven to the next level. Citizens of the Month included fifth-graders Adeline Moua and Eddie Lins, sixth-graders Tanner Awker and Eliana Anastasia, seventh-graders Noah Kalthoff and Ava Reiersen, and eighth-graders Brielyn Leffler and Peder Bjorklund.



'Vaping' is a growing concern

By Delano Public Schools Staff

Delano High School and Delano Middle School have seen an increase in the use of vaporizers among DHS and DMS students.

The district is increasingly concerned about the matter, as many parents are being caught off-guard by their child's use of "vapes." The purpose of this article is to inform you of the issue and give you resources to use if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behavior, as well as alert you to possible repercussions if your child engages in vaping on school property.

What is vaping?

Vaporizers (aka: e-cigs) are small devices that are used to heat up liquids that turn into vapor and are inhaled by the user. The e-cig itself can come in a variety of styles. Some look like a thick pen, some look just like a metal cigarette, some like a large thumb drive (known as a Juuling), and some look like a small flask with a round chimney coming off the top.

Most of these devices are small and can easily be hidden in a pocket, sock, backpack, etc. A variety of substances can be used within a vaporizer, but the most popular is nicotine juice (e-juice). The e-juice is marketed in a variety of flavors and can often smell fruity.

Some of the juices used within an e-cig can contain caffeine in addition to the nicotine. Some e-juice does not contain nicotine. Illicit substances such as methamphetamine and marijuana can also be consumed through the use of a vaporizer.

Effects and penalties

There is varying information available about vaporizers and their effects, which



Vaporizers can come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

makes this a complicated issue. Despite popular belief, the use of vaporizers is NOT harmless. They are also illegal to use for anyone under the age of 18.

One of the most common misconceptions is that if the e-juice contains zero nicotine it is OK for someone under the age of 18 to purchase, consume and possess it. This is not the case, however, and if a minor gets caught with an e-cig they can be given a tobacco violation, which includes a payable fine.

Students caught possessing or using a vaporizer on school property are held to the same standards as those in place for other tobacco/nicotine products. Minnesota State High School League violations include missed games, and out-of-school suspensions and citations from the Wright County Sheriff's Department are also possible.

Help available

Delano Public Schools takes the issue of vaping very seriously and is genuinely concerned about the health of all of our students.

We have chemical health education and prevention services available for students located in the school. This includes a

licensed alcohol and drug counselor who, since 2006, has been providing chemical dependency services in individual and group formats for students who have experienced concerns related to substance use. These services utilize an S-BIRT model, which includes screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (if necessary).

Additionally, DHS has begun a tobacco/nicotine group for students who would like to join or for students who have received a tobacco violation. The group meets bi-weekly and its objectives are to provide students with education on tobacco/nicotine, to reduce the likelihood of their use, and to provide support for those who are trying to discontinue tobacco/nicotine use.

If you would like your child to work with the substance use professional or attend the nicotine support group, please contact Marie Techam, high school social worker, at 763-972-3365 ext. 3518 or marie.techam@delanoschools.org, or Nicole Gohman, middle school social worker, at 763-972-3365 ext. 3110 or nicole.gohman@delanoschools.org.

For additional information on vaporizers, see https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTip-Sheet_508.pdf

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Nicole Gohman, DMS Social Worker
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Food drive

The fifth-grade class focused on doing different acts of kindness throughout February, which included a first-time food drive. The effort netted over 800 items totalling 555 pounds for the local food shelf.



Announcements

Anxiety presentation March 20

Licensed psychologist and registered play therapist Rob Winkler of Playmore & Prosper will present a special workshop about anxiety in children from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20, in the elementary school multi-purpose room.

The presentation will help dispel popular myths regarding anxiety in children, include the latest research and information, explain the two essential components needed to defeat anxiety, and offer creative and playful strategies to ease and eliminate anxiety.

Parents, educators and those who work with children are welcome to attend. The event is free, and childcare is available. RSVP to michelle.krueger@delanoschools.org.

'Screenagers' showing at DHS

Are you watching kids scroll through life, with their rapid-fire thumbs and a six-second attention span? Stanford-trained physician and filmmaker Delaney Ruston saw that with her own kids and learned that the average kid spends 6.5 hours a day looking at screens. She wondered about the impact of all this time, and about the friction occurring in homes and schools around negotiating screen time.

In "Screenagers," Delaney explores struggles over social media, video games, academics and internet addiction. Through poignant and unexpectedly funny stories, along with surprising insights from authors, psychologists and brain scientists, "Screenagers" reveals how tech time impacts kids' development and offers solutions on how adults can empower kids to best navigate the digital world and find balance.

"Screenagers" will be shown at Delano High School on Thursday, April 5. Students in grades 9-12 will view the film during the school day, and a longer version will be shown for parents and community members at 7 p.m.

Hall monitors needed in April

The middle school is looking for volunteers (who have completed district volunteer training) to serve as hall monitors during MCA testing during three sessions in April.

Volunteers are needed for 8 to 11:15 a.m. morning shifts, and for 1 to 3 p.m. afternoon shifts on Monday and Tuesday, April 9-10, from Monday through Thursday, April 16-19, and from

Monday through Thursday, April 23-26. The primary need is for morning shift volunteers.

For more details, or to sign up, contact Assistant Principal Steve Schauburger at 763.972.7602, ext. 2356 or steve.schauburger@delanoschools.org.

School closing information

School may be closed for the day, started late or dismissed early due to weather conditions, emergencies, utility outages or other conditions that threaten the health and/or safety of our students and staff.

Families will be notified by the school district's instant parent contact system for emergency school closings.

The following news media outlets will also be notified: WCCO 4 TV, WCCO Radio, KSTP 5 TV, KMSP 9 TV and KARE 11 TV.

Families are encouraged to have a plan in place for their students when emergency closings, late starts or early dismissals occur. Watch for calendar changes and possible make-up days due to school closings communicated via school publications, Skylert parent emails, phone calls, the district website, Facebook and Twitter.

If you would like to receive a text message, you must set this option up in your family access account. Log into your account and on the left, click on Skylert. You can list your phone number under "Text Message Numbers" and check the categories for which you want this option applied. Then click "Save."

Volunteer at Delano schools

Whether you have just a few hours a year or several a month, there is no shortage of opportunities to share your skills and interests at Delano Public Schools. Volunteers are invaluable contributors to the success of our students and make a positive impact on the school and community.

Last year volunteers contributed more than 8,000 hours in a variety of roles, such as classroom helpers, site base committee members and chaperones. Not sure what role interests you? Find additional information and descriptions on the Delano Schools website.

For more information, or to register as a volunteer, visit www.delano.k12.mn.us/district/school-services/volun or call 763.972.3365, ext. 2333.

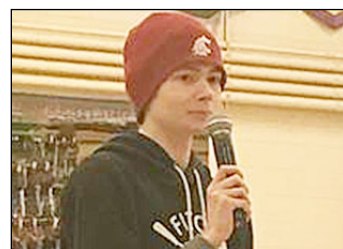


Jazz day

Delano Middle School hosted the 4th Annual Jazz Festival on Thursday, March 8. Attractions included performances by jazz bands from six middle schools, and a performance by professionals from The Wolverines Big Band. Here, members of the DMS jazz band perform 'This Little Light of Mine.'

March means Pennies for Patients

DMS is holding its annual Pennies for Patients drive from March 8-29. During a kickoff event on Wednesday, March 7, DHS student and cancer survivor Alex Weed spoke about how the money raised in such campaigns saves lives. The school's goal is to raise \$10,000.



Alex Weed

How to become a substitute teacher

Training workshop on April 4-5

Have you ever wanted to try your hand at teaching? A two-day workshop is planned for people with a non-education four-year bachelor's degree from an accredited college who would like to become a limited, short-call substitute teacher. Participants will receive training in:

- The process for applying for the two-year license through the Minnesota Department of Education
- The substitute teacher's role in the classroom and district
- The basics of classroom management, instruction, and child development
- Communication skills
- Awareness of legal issues relating to students and a teacher's obligations.

The workshop takes place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4, and from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 5, at Resource Training & Solutions (137 23rd Street S, Sartell).

There is a fee to attend. To register, go to www.resourcetraining.com, enter the course code in the "Search for Events" box located to the right on the homepage, then follow the prompts. The course code is 9999. For more info, visit www.resource-training.com.

Olympiad

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"It gives our kids a chance to do geeky science stuff after school with other kids," said Schaack. "It gives them that camaraderie like a sports team does, but it's academic rather than athletic."

Eighth-grader Ethan Thomas said he and a friend got involved about a year and a half ago when he was told the team was looking for someone to build the balsam wood tower. This year he took second place at the region meet.

"I just really like to build and do the hands-on stuff," he said. "It's fun to compete. When you can get a medal at those competitions, that's pretty fun."

Schaack said the team is rebuilding this year, but he expects to recapture some of that past success now that there

has been renewed interest from the students.

"We've done pretty well this year, and the kids know there is a legacy," he said. "We have a lot of trophies from regionals, and a lot of state trophies from past years. We used to be in the top three of state every year until about 2012."

Experience tends to help, so Schaack is looking forward to what his students can do once they have a few competitions behind them.

"The kids who have done it before are better. So next year I think we're going to really give it a good shot. And the high school team in the next few years will be amazing," he said.

Thomas and a number of other students were scheduled to compete at state on Saturday, March 10.

"I've just done the tower so far, but I'll be doing meteorology next," Thomas said. "I just think it's fun."



Tiger Tracks is published by Delano Middle School. Editor, Paul Downer, District Office, 763.972.3365, ext. 2111, paul.downer@delanoschools.org



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