

Elmwood-Murdock Public School Newsletter

January 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT Ryan Knippelmeyer

First, I would like to thank our school community for helping us successfully complete the 1st semester of the 2021-2022 school year. We all greatly appreciate your support as we work to provide a great educational experience for all of our students. We look forward to a great 2nd semester of the school year! On behalf of our teachers, staff, and administrators, we hope you had a very Happy Holiday season and a great start to 2022!

Facility Upgrades

This past summer we updated two areas of our district's facilities that were not a part of the 2008 bond issue. We replaced the roof on the junior high wing in Murdock and the roof of the music room in Elmwood.

During the summer of 2022 we will be working with Voss Lighting to complete an entire district lighting upgrade in both Elmwood and Murdock. We will be replacing the old lighting fixtures and upgrading to LED lights across the district. By doing this we will enhance the lighting in both of our buildings while also seeing an energy cost savings for many years to come.

2022 Nebraska Department of Education External Visit

In order to be an accredited school in the State of Nebraska, every five years we must have an external visitation team come and visit our schools and provide us feedback on the goals that have been established for our district in the area of continuous school improvement. Over the past five years our district goals have centered on reading comprehension and fluency, and technology integration. On February 23-24 we will have a group of educators visiting our district reviewing our progress towards the goals that have been established, and providing us feedback and suggestions on how to continue to build on the accomplishments that we have attained to this point. Thank you to our school improvement team, ESU 3, and our teachers and administrators for the work that you've done to prepare us for this year's visit.

1st Semester Accomplishments

We've had many students involved in many different activities during the first semester of the school year. We've also had many successes in various activities. Our high school volleyball team qualified for the state volleyball tournament and placed fourth at the state competition. Our high school football team qualified for the state football playoffs and lost to the eventual state champion in the first round. Our one-act play qualified for the state one-act play competition and finished by placing 3rd in the state competition. We have many students that participate in many different activities throughout the school year. Congratulations to these students, and our coaches and sponsors on your successes during the first semester of the school year.

Statistical Information For Cass County Schools – 2020-2021 School Year

General Fund Levy Comparisons for Cass County Schools:

Elmwood-Murdock:	.9040
Conestoga:	.9500
Louisville:	.9981
Weeping Water:	1.0307
Plattsmouth:	1.0469

Keeping Our Students Safe – Stopping for School Buses:

Nationwide there's been very tragic incidents around school bus stops. Please be reminded of the following laws that pertain to stopping for school buses on the roadway (as referenced from the Nebraska Safety Center):

Two-Lane Roadway – When the school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop.

Two-Lane Roadway with a Center Turning Lane – When the school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop.

Four-Lane Roadway without a Median Separation – When the school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop.

Divided Highway of Four Lanes or More with a Median Separation – When the school bus stops for passengers, only traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop.

Roadway of Four or More Lanes with a Continuous Center Turning Lane – When the school bus stops for passengers, only traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop.

JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH PRINCIPAL Kyle Rohrig

Welcome to the end of the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year. It's an important time of year to reflect and be thankful for what our school district has been able to collectively accomplish. As I continue into my second year as the 7-12 principal, it has been my pleasure to serve the Elmwood-Murdock school community as well as be a member of it. Our continued mission at EM High School is to empower all students to achieve success.

The students in the JH/SH have collectively taken advantage of all the opportunities offered to them during the school day and after school. I'd like to commend our students on all of their work, dedication, and continued excellence during the first semester. Our school staff places teaching positive relationship skills at the top of the list, and our students learn daily the power that positive relationships can bring to their school and community culture. The 7-12 staff continually emphasize and model the social skills needed for students to prosper at their grade level, and towards their progression and eventual transition out of high school. This will be a continued point of emphasis for our staff as we begin the second semester to the school year. And I expect our students to continue

to meet and exceed the learning and social goals that are set for them by their teachers, coaches, parents, and community members.

The teachers and support staff have done a tremendous job this first semester continuing their work to serving our student needs. In my tenure at Elmwood-Murdock I've continued to see our staff take on any challenge in the work environment time after time. One of the realities of the current school year is staffing shortages related to many positions in our school district. Our staff has not hesitated to volunteer to drive vans and buses, cover additional classes, and embrace the team approach that better serves our students. All of the staff understand collectively that our students come first, and challenges related to the service of that mission need to be met and overcome as a team. I'd like to thank our staff once again on a terrific semester serving our students. Our efforts, together, have made a positive impact on the students that we serve in the Elmwood-Murdock schools.

I'm looking forward to the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year. Our school community can accomplish tremendous things for our students if we continue to work together in our roles. Thank you once again to all of the students, staff, community members, and district leadership. The commitment of all of us, collectively, will once again empower all students to achieve success.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION Trisha Nichelson

We've had another amazing start to our school year. I would like to thank our school community for all of your support to ensure our students achieve success. I would also like to thank our staff and students as they are all working hard to stay safe, healthy and learning. Every day I am thankful for the opportunities we are given and the great support system we have around us.

Thank you to our staff for the dedication to the students of our district. All of the staff including teachers, paraeducators, nurse, bus drivers, custodians, substitutes, kitchen and office personnel play an important role in the success of our students and school. For the students to be successful the staff must work together and have high expectations of themselves and their students.

We are fortunate to have students that believe that education is important and do their best on their school work and local and state assessments. I am very proud and impressed with our students' efforts and achievements on their school work thus far this year.

Huge thank you to the S.O.S. group as they have continued to work to support our students with many great learning opportunities and enhancements to our school. They have helped support students through the Trunk or Treat, Family Literacy Night, meals for teachers during parent teacher conferences, water bottles to students when they first came back to school, and treats to celebrate the end of the school year last year. They also grant each teacher funds to purchase classroom supplies for their classrooms yearly. The students and staff are very thankful

and fortunate to have the support from this organization.

Reading is a vital component to the academic success of our students. To help foster a love of reading in our students, we use Accelerated Reading which monitors and manages student reading practice. This is a supplemental program to our general education reading curriculum. Our students have been working hard and doing a great job of setting reading goals and working to make those goals a success. Staff and students compete monthly for reading goal success. Thank you to Mrs. Paulsen and the classroom teachers for overseeing and promoting this reading to students. Keep reading!

This year the district purchased a new reading curriculum for all Prek through sixth grade students. This curriculum has higher expectations of learning for both teachers and students to adjust to. Wonders 2020 is the curriculum. It is accessible for families at <https://my.mheducation.com/>.

In July 2018, the legislature enacted the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (Section 79-2601-79-2607) that ensures students have the necessary supports to read proficiently by grade 3. Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, the law outlines a number of processes to identify struggling readers and provide focused interventions. While most of the exemplary practices described in the legislation are already happening in our school, the law brings a renewed emphasis to the importance of early literacy and an opportunity to accelerate reading proficiency for some students. This early literacy law requires the district to set in motion procedures to identify and support students who demonstrate challenges with early reading. These include early and frequent screening, parental notification, the design of an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP), and supplemental reading intervention services. Thank you to Mrs. Smith, the Reading Advantage Team, and Kindergarten through Third grade teachers for working to ensure we are meeting these requirements and more.

Teachers and staff work hard to help teach students appropriate behaviors in all areas of the school environment. Our Knight Pride Expectations are: Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible. Students also have opportunities to be "Caught Being Good" in which they get a card which is placed in a classroom bucket. Cards are then drawn from these buckets for prizes such as pencils, ice cream cones from the C-Store, or money for the school store. Thank you to the Student Council and C-Store for helping support this program.

Our school mission is to Empower All Students to Achieve Success. Together with staff, students, and families we are working to fulfill this mission. Thank you to all who help in every way to ensure our students have the tools they need to achieve that success.

Special Education

Many children are born with or acquire conditions that can delay their normal growth and development. Fortunately, many of these conditions can be improved if parents recognize the problem early and seek help. These conditions may impact a child's vision, speech/language, motor skills, socialization, thinking or hearing.

Currently, the district has over seventy-one students who are being serviced with Special Education services ranging from ages birth to twenty-one. These services are covered with an Occupational Therapist, Physical Thera-

pist, Speech and Language Therapist, Pathologist, Behavioral Therapist, Audiologist, School Psychologist, Reading Specialist, Counselors, Special Education teachers and classroom teachers. The district utilizes the Educational Service Unit #3 to help provide these services for our students. It is great to see how so many people work together to help ensure our students' success.

If you suspect your child may have developmental delays, the district offers comprehensive services for infants, toddlers, and pre-school age children who have disabilities. Elmwood-Murdock is committed to providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to learn and grow in a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment, using research based practices.

Check the milestones your child should have reached by his or her first birthday. This link provided by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention gives specific milestones. Please remember that these are only guidelines. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/milestones-1yr.html>.

If a parent or physician has questions or concerns about their child's development for infants and toddlers to 3 years of age that person should contact the Early Development Network Referral Agency of the child/family or call: Nebraska Child Find (toll free) 1-888-806-6287.

For additional information on Nebraska Child Find for all children please visit: <http://www.childfind.ne.gov>.

Once a referral has been made the following will take place:

The referral will be appointed to a Services Coordinator from Education Service Unit #3, who will contact the family within seven days to determine if they are interested in Early Development Network services.

With the family's permission, the Services Coordinator will arrange for an assessment with the local school district to determine the unique needs of the child and his or her eligibility. The Services Coordinator can link the family with community resources before the assessment if needed.

If the child qualifies, the Services Coordinator will work with Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools to identify others who can participate on a team to help the family develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which sets goals for the child and family and identifies activities and services needed to achieve these goals. The IFSP will be completed within 45 days, so the family can access Early Development Network Services as quickly as possible.

If, as a parent, you have concerns or questions with your three to five year old child's development, set up an appointment for your child to be screened. You may set this appointment up by contacting Trisha Nichelson at nichelson@emknights.org or 402-994-2125.

MTSS

MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support) is the intervention process initiated by the Nebraska Department of Education. This process has given a guideline as to how school districts need to have a system in place for providing interventions needed for all students to be successful in school. We have been working to improve the MTSS process at Elmwood-Murdock. At the elementary level, there are programs such as Reading

Advantage and Math Advantage which are used to support student learning. At the junior and senior high level teachers are working to provide support before school, after school and during the academic period.

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR Lance Steffen

As we close out the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year, it is a time to look back and celebrate our successes and reflect fondly on how much we have to celebrate. I am proud of our students, teachers, coaches, and families for all that you have done to ensure our students the chance to learn and compete this year and to excel in many ways both in the classroom and in our activities.

The fall activity season ended for the Volleyball team at the State Tournament and a 4th place finish and a 23-11 record. In addition to a great season, Brenna Schmidt was selected 1st Team All State and Tatum Backemeyer was selected 2nd Team All State by the Lincoln Journal Star and the Omaha World Herald this season – Congratulations to Brenna and Tatum! This was an exciting season with many great performances throughout. The Football team completed their season on the road with a first round loss to Howells-Dodge in the playoffs. It was another good season for Knights Football. The team finished the season with a 5-4 record. The Cross-Country team competed well this year in our co-op with Weeping Water and their season ended at the District Meet. The EM/WW Trailblazers showed great improvement this year with most team members improving their times as the season went along. The Girls Golf Team had an awesome season as well, with many new faces playing competitively all season long.

Our Vocal Music students have been very busy this year and performing nicely as a group. They have steadily improved as the year has gone on and will continue to make us proud.

The Marching Band season was back on this year after a hiatus last year due to Covid. Mr. Hanson and his band are always competitive and represented Elmwood-Murdock well in this year.

The Play Production Department had another successful season placing 2nd in the ECNC Tournament, winning a District Championship and qualifying for State Play Production for the second year in a row. At State they represented us well and came home with a 3rd place finish at the competition for the second year in a row! I am proud of the consistency and dedication the cast, crew, and sponsors exhibit. Congratulations to One Act on a great season!

Several students received All-Conference honors this fall. For Volleyball: Brenna Schmidt (1st Team), Tatum Backemeyer (2nd Team), Lexi Bacon (3rd Team), and Laney Frahm (3rd Team). For Football, Sam Clements, Henry Coleman, Reid Fletcher, and Cade Hosier received 1st Team recognition. In One Act, Riley Rose was selected as the Conference's Most Outstanding Actor.

Football All-District recognition was also awarded this fall. Sam Clements, Henry Coleman, Reid Fletcher, and Cade Hosier received 1st Team recognition.

The Fall Academic All State recipients were also announced and Elmwood-Murdock was represented well. Lexi Bacon and Sela Rikli for Volleyball, Henry Coleman and Cade Hosier for Football, Tucker Oehlerking and Brianna Ross for Cross Country, and Kait-

lynn Ashlock and Riley Rose for Play Production. Congratulations to our outstanding students!

Congratulations to all of our students involved in after school activities. They have worked extremely hard not only during school hours, but before and after school. It is no small feat to put in the amount of time they do in their respective activities and continue to exhibit great performances in the classroom and the field of competition. We are proud of every one of them. WAY TO GO KNIGHTS!!

Though the Homecoming Dance was held on October 2nd. On October 1st, Our Homecoming King and Queen were crowned. Candidates were: Lexi Bacon, Bailey Frahm, Sela Rikli, Jack Deibert, Cody Kopf, and Jax Spellman. Our 2021 King was Jack Deibert and the Queen was Sela Rikli. Congratulations to them all!

The E-M Booster Club has again been busy planning and raising money to put back into the various activities throughout the school. The Booster Club meets monthly and would love to have anyone interested come and join in on the fun. This year we have helped with the purchase of Hudl for Volleyball, and Basketball teams, Plyometric boxes for our athletes, new golf bags, and are in the process of purchasing new track sweats for our track teams. We do several fundraising activities throughout the school year as well and again we would love to have your help. Our first fundraiser of the year was our annual Tailgate BBQ, which was held on Friday, September 11th. The Booster Club also sponsored a Volleyball game on October 19th. Additionally, the Booster Club held a Bring-Your-Own-Shirt clothing fundraiser which was very successful. Finally, the Booster Club will host a soup supper during the Boys and Girls Basketball game on January 14th. We hope you can all make it to the game and help support our students through the Booster Club. I also want to make sure that I thank all the Booster Club members who have helped with our various fundraisers throughout the year. It would be impossible to do all of these great things for our kids without your endless support. Finally, if you are interested in being a part of the Booster Club or in helping out just contact the school to find out where and when we will be having our next meeting. Hope to see you there!

K-6 SCHOOL COUNSELOR **Judi Sigler**

Just when you think you've seen it all—each school year brings another adventure and no days (or years) are alike. I love this about education, it's exhausting, but I continue to learn something new every year. Please, if you should ever need to talk to me about concerns regarding your child, I am glad to take time to have a confidential conversation.

The following information covers a few examples of what I do in the classroom, as well as a resource for handling technology.

Common Sense Media. Have you ever questioned whether or not zombie shows are ok for your child? Do you think about what is going on in those YouTube videos your child is obsessed with? Use [CommonSense.org](https://www.commonsense.org). They answer the question of what is OK to watch and how to handle screen time. There are guides for TikTok, Roblox, Fortnite, YouTube, and more. Check it out.

Lunch & Recess. The school counseling program is available for ALL students in the district. Students are welcome to schedule time with me, whether they have any particu-

lar concerns or not. I meet with various groups during lunch and recess. We sometimes create things or just visit. So if you hear your child say "I'm going to see the counselor today!" --it doesn't mean they have any "problems" --it's my way of being an available trusted adult.

Random Acts of Kindness (RAK). All students have had a portion or will continue to learn with the curriculum based around kindness. You may have noticed work centering around various themes of respect, integrity, and perseverance.

Careers & Education (4th & 6th Grades): I'm continuing a curriculum about careers and education for the 4th and 6th grade students. They are learning about personal strengths, values, and interests in relation to choosing how they want to spend their life. We're also inviting guests to speak about their careers.

Be Well. Finally, I hope you are able to take some time and put effort into restoring yourself. Schedule a no tech day, get outside, connect with an old friend, or just go get yourself a nice cup of coffee and relax! We all need balance in our lives and it's worth taking stock of how we're spending time.

Thank you for making me a part of Elmwood-Murdock Schools. I look forward to the remainder of the school year and continuing to get to know the community.

7-12 SCHOOL COUNSELOR **DISTRICT CURRICULUM** **COORDINATOR** Heather Bornemeier

Junior High/High School Guidance erving Students

I continue to thoroughly enjoy being able to work with all our students! The beginning of the school year was busy with organizing student and teacher schedules as well as acclimating our 7th graders to the building. I want to take the time to highlight some of the happenings that I have facilitated or assisted with so far this school year. In September I implemented a monthly Guidance Group with 7th and 8th graders. As individual classes, we meet once per month during one of their scheduled class periods. During Guidance Group we partake in activities and discussions centered on social-emotional issues appropriate for each age group. This has been a great way to get to know the 7th graders and to continue working with the 8th graders. All of my guidance lessons are based on the NDE and ASCA standards of counseling.

My Website

I continue to make it my mission to open the door for communication and provide endless resources to our students, teachers, and parents. Thus, I continue to use my website that you can either access through the E-M homepage (under guidance) or by going directly to the site. Feel free to check it out. <https://hbornemeier.wixsite.com/bornecounselor>

Advisory Council

Ms. Sigler and I continue to expand upon our Advisory Council which we launched two years ago. The group includes the two of us, administration, parents, teachers, and community members. We feel that it is extremely important to have a positive working relationship with all those we serve. We continue to strive to meet the needs of our students and be open to change and growth so that our students continue to be the focus of all we do. The Advisory Council has given Judi and

myself many helpful pieces of input as we continue to grow professionally and always aim to serve our students in the best ways.

SENCAP/Southeast Community College
This fall many of our Juniors and Seniors participated in the Southeast Community College SENCAP program. There are two avenues for students to learn and grow through this program: one is the college preparatory classes which count as dual credit and the other is the career path courses which offer students the opportunity to explore different careers they may be interested in. Southeast Community College partners with Elmwood-Murdock schools to help students financially with a portion of these courses.

Curriculum and Instruction School Improvement Goals

Our current school improvement goals are:

1. All students will improve their reading (fluency and comprehension) across the curriculum.

All students will be prepared to successfully thrive in a highly competitive global technological society.

Our school motto is to Empower All Students to Achieve Success.

Together, with staff and students, we continue to fulfill our school motto by working diligently to achieve these goals.

Curriculum

During the spring of 2021 our science team and elementary reading team reviewed many new curriculum options. We are grateful for our school board as they approved all suggested new curriculum for the current school year in the following areas: 3-7 Science, PreK-6 Reading, 7th grade World History, and 11th grade English. Our teachers have been working diligently to implement these new sets of curricula with their students.

Instruction

As a district, we continue to work toward the Marzano Educational Model. This is our fourth year in the process. An added component two years ago was the implementation of a new teacher effectiveness tool where frequent and routine walk-throughs were conducted by building principals. This formative assessment approach is still being used by administrators to continue to help teachers set teaching and learning goals.

State Assessments

The state requires two assessments to be given in the spring to all students in 3rd-8th and 11th grades. The 11th graders take the ACT exam where the other grades take the NSCAS (Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System). These exams test students in the areas of reading, math, and science. These exams are used by the state to monitor student progress and ensure school accountability for student learning.

ACT/PSAT/Accuplacer

This fall many students took the ACT, PSAT, or Accuplacer here at Elmwood-Murdock. These exams are college entrance exams to determine eligibility to attend various post-secondary institutions. These exams also help students to determine what course path they may need to take to obtain degrees they are seeking. The ASVAB was also given to all Juniors and included a comprehensive interpretation/analysis session which also included a career workshop. This exam helps students learn more about their career pathway strengths and determines eligibility to join the armed forces. Juniors will receive test preparation through John Baylor test prep in the spring.

NSAA Academic All-State

Many students were selected for Academic All-State for the fall 2021 activities season. Criteria for this award includes maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or above and demonstrating leadership both on and off the field/court.

EducationQuest/Apply-to-College Day

In October, Juniors and Seniors took part in a presentation from EducationQuest teaching them some important fundamentals of applying and seeking college degrees. Topics covered were filling out applications, the FAFSA, scholarship opportunities, financial aid and other options for funding post-secondary education. Each senior was encouraged to apply to at least one college or for one scholarship on this day. Each Senior also created FAFSA ID's and started the FAFSA process.

TECHNOLOGY **Paul Dwyer**

Network security and user safety has always been a top priority for our students and staff at Elmwood-Murdock. This past year we have taken many steps to improve and secure our users experience on our schools network. We have taken various steps to improve our safety of our users by implementing additional firewall security, and also are looking to add two factor authentication to some of our systems. The district has purchased two Wyebot network sensors. These sensors are constantly monitoring our wireless network for any out of the ordinary instances that might affect our wireless network.

Be sure to visit the schools website which has become a "one stop shop" for all school related information. The site contains forms needed by parents, menus, calendars, news stories, and also daily updates of happenings in school via our "Live Feed". Please visit the site at www.emknights.org. Along with our website, be sure to follow the Elmwood-Murdock twitter feed for the latest school information. Follow us @EMKnightsSchool.

The District has continued with great success to use striv.tv as the vehicle to stream various activities that are held at both the Murdock and Elmwood sites. Striv.tv is a online streaming application, that allows us to stream our home athletic activities and also a few select other events. Please turn into our striv.tv channel for a listing of all events and also to view our live events. You can check it out at <http://striv.tv/channel/elmwood-murdock>.

We have just started our 5th year of our 1:1 laptop initiative for grades 4-12. One of the great benefits of this project has been for students in grades K-3 to keep their laptop carts up to date at a faster rate than if we had not been involved in a 1:1 project. This is due to new laptops that are purchased for the incoming freshman each year, has allowed the older laptops (Seniors that graduate) to be updated and placed down in our carts for the lower grade levels.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE **Rhonda Towle**

Pathologists (SLPs) in public schools work with children who have communication impairments. These can include children who have spoken and written language disorders, difficulty producing sounds, stuttering, cognitive-communication disorders, social skill deficits, or developmental delays. At Elmwood-Murdock, Mrs. Towle and Mrs. Stiles collaborate and serve children from birth through high-school. Working with a wide range of children and families truly makes each day rewarding.

Causes of communication impairments are often unknown, but are never the fault of the child or parents. Recent research does highlight a risk factor for communication impairments that we feel is important to share; screen time in young children. An alarming statistic from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association notes that even thirty minutes of daily screen time in young children increases the risk of an expressive speech delay in children aged six months to two years by almost fifty percent!

It is important that parents have access to foster healthy communication habits in a technology-driven world, in particular for our young children's critical brain development! We appreciate Cari Ebert's quote, who is a popular speaker and defender of young children learning through play, "There is no app to replace your lap!" Please visit the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's, "Healthy Communication and Popular Technology Initiative" at www.communicationandtech.org for more tips about developing screen-time habits in a tech-driven world for your child.

Do you wonder if your child's communication is typically developing? If so, please know resources are available. Children learn to talk and produce sounds at different times, and there is a wide range of what is considered typical development. If you have a concern, you don't need to wait to get help. If you suspect your child could benefit from an early intervention evaluation, please contact Trisha Nichelson (994-2125) and she can help guide the process.

To learn more about communication impairments, including tips on how to stimulate speech and language development, please visit the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's website at www.asha.org. There is a wealth of information regarding all types of communication impairments including tips on identifying signs of speech and language disorders.

PRESCHOOL **Jenny Schroll**

I am enjoying another year of Preschool at Elmwood-Murdock! I currently have ten 3 year olds, and fourteen 4 year olds. Due to high number in both classes, we are separating the classes into two groups. I have two wonderful para-educators, Mrs. Kim Griffin, and Mrs. Tammy Rikli, who get to spend their days with us in the preschool room.

In the 3 year old class, they attend school 5 days a week for 2 ½ hours. We are focusing on shapes, colors, learning the alphabet, alphabet sounds, number recognition, and 1:1 correspondence. The students are also learning how to share and play cooperatively with others during this time. During class time, we are also working on our social skills and listening techniques.

In the 4 year old class, they attend school 5 days a week for 4 hours. The students eat lunch at school, which allows them the opportunity to learn about the school before they reach kindergarten. The students are working with numbers, alphabet, handwriting, Social-Emotional skills, Science, and Social Studies. We are working with the curriculum, Handwriting Without Tears, which is used school wide.

We are very thankful to be working in such a great school! Happy Holidays!

PRESCHOOL **Courtney Baer**

I'm loving year three at Elmwood-Murdock teaching preschool! Mrs. Kim Griffin and Mrs. Tammy Rikli are wonderful para-educators who spend their days working in preschool. There are two sections of preschool.

The morning preschool class has 10 preschoolers who attend 5 days a week for 2.5 hours a day. We are focusing on learning the alphabet, alphabet sounds, shapes, colors, number recognition, and 1:1 correspondence. Preschoolers are also learning about social skills; they practice sharing and work together cooperatively.

The afternoon preschool class has 15 preschoolers who attend 5 days a week for four hours. Preschoolers have the opportunity to eat lunch at school, which helps with kindergarten readiness. Preschoolers learn about handwriting skills, alphabet, numbers, Social-Emotional skills, Social Studies and Science. We are using *Wonders of the World* Curriculum and *Handwriting Without Tears*, which are both used school wide.

We are grateful to be working in a great school district! Happy Holidays!

KINDERGARTEN DAYS **Diane Vice** **Makayla Collins**

K is for Knight Pride-we are proud to be part of this school!

I is for learning to be Independent and a Problem Solver

N is for Numbers; recognizing them and writing to 100 by ones, fives and tens

D is for Developing our fine motor skills such as cutting and handwriting

E is for Exercising to improve our gross motor skills for coordination and muscle tone

R is for Reaching for the stars or to "Be Our Best"

G is for Good choices to help us follow our school rules

A is for the Alphabet-learning letters, sounds and words

R is for Recess; playtime is important for learning social skills

T is for Theme Time where we learn about science and social studies

E is for Exploring, an essential tool for learning

N is for New and exciting experiences happening everyday!

D is for Daily routines; young children rely on them

A is for Active learning; we learn best by "doing"

Y is for Youthful Enthusiasm; we are excited about learning new things

S is for Smiling faces seen every day

As you can see Kindergarten Days are filled with lots of learning, cooperation and hard work, but hopefully lots of fun too.

FIRST GRADE **Vanessa Drucke** **Kori Dlouhy** **Shawna Harrison**

Fascinating things are happening in First Grade!

Interesting centers of Listening, ABC Word Work, Writing, and Spelling Words to Know are done every day to enhance academic growth.

Reading curriculum has been updated to Wonders. This is our guide to learning to read, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and writing.

Spelling tests are an exciting new challenge to students in first grade.

Themes are incorporated seasonally each month to include health, science and social studies.

Guided Reading Groups are conducted daily with teachers in small groups to meet the needs of all the different levels of learning. Respectfulness, Responsibility, Safety and Be your Best are all a part of our school motto.

Art opportunities are given twice each semester with our art teacher, Mrs. Trundle who displays their work in the community.

Developing our Math curriculum includes learning new vocabulary, problem solving, graphing, fractions, shapes and their symmetry, addition and subtraction strategies. Energy and excitement have peaked at the end of this great year; we look forward to the future to grow and learn together as we encounter more great adventures.

SECOND GRADE **Celena Mortimer** **Carae Oehlerking**

S—Sharing, caring, learning and growing are the outcomes of practicing our Knight Expectation skills. Second Graders are encouraged to resolve conflicts on their own.

E—Enjoying the holiday season by helping others that are less fortunate. Second Graders have donated items to help fill stockings for local children.

C—Children are our focus, we love watching them grow as students and individuals. Children have already shown growth in many areas with much more to come.

O—Operations in math like addition and subtraction need speed and accuracy. We are all busy using our math reasoning skills and explaining our mathematical thinking...there is so much to learn!

N—Notes to sing need to be practiced with Mrs. Graff for our public performances like the Winter and Spring Program.

D—Do you know the Knights' Motto? Ask a Second Grader to tell you what it is. We are working hard to show our Knight Pride at school and in the community!

G—Guidance with Ms. Sigler focuses on how to use our social problem solving skills. Stories and modeling help us navigate real-life situations before they happen.

R—Reading strategies are essential in our encounters with the printed word. Our small reading groups work on stories, comprehension, language skills, and vocabulary. Thank You to Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Hogue, and Mrs. Paulsen for supporting our reading skills.

A—All the extra help that our paraeducators provide in the classroom, lunchroom, and before and after school is greatly appreciated. Thanks for all you do!

D—Do some exercise to have a healthy mind and body. Play a new game to learn good sportsmanship. Mr. Backemeyer teaches us this and more in PE.

E—Everything else in our curriculum is just as important for a balanced student. So let's include Social Studies, which presents a great opportunity for multi-cultural activities. Science experiments are a plus. School Assemblies are always educational and entertaining! And that, after all, is what teaching second graders is all about!

THIRD GRADE **Cayle Burbach** **Jen Justus**

If you observe any third grader for nine months you will see some amazing changes. They are becoming more responsible, developing a sense of humor, keying in on what really interests them, and hopefully becoming

a lifelong learner. In the beginning of the year we gathered a lot of data. We have decided that we need to concentrate on three main academic areas to help our students be successful: reading, math, and writing. Our students need to be able to read, understand, communicate in the 21st century, and be able to become problem solvers.

This is our first year using our new language arts curriculum-Wonders 2020, and students have been very adaptive to it. They are enjoying the new stories, genres, and online activities. We love that it gives us a variety of texts to support the learning, as well as multiple opportunities to engage our readers. We have studied the following genres: expository text, folktales, narrative nonfiction, realistic fiction, historical fiction, poetry, and argumentative text (they really enjoyed learning to argue). We are very thankful and fortunate to have this new curriculum.

This year we are working hard to develop a sense of independent reading within a book that is the "right fit". Meaning that the student can read the words, and comprehend the story without help from an adult. This helps to increase their fluency, as well as, comprehension. We also encourage reading at home, either for the BOOK IT Program, or for their A.R. points-with the goal of 14 per quarter.

In writing, students are working on writing quality paragraphs with topic sentences, details and closing sentences. This can be a tough subject for most 3rd graders because we go through the writing process of draft, edit, revision & polish. This year students are putting their final drafts in a polished writing book, which we are sure parents will treasure, and/or we are creating technology pieces to present to the class. This helps us keep up on our 21st century skills in the world of technology. We will begin to learn cursive in April, after our state assessment. Students love to learn cursive!

We are working and exploring very hard in math. We have learned a variety of strategies, and the kids have found some favorites that they like to use. We have also incorporated ixl.com learning this year for center time to help build fluency. We have studied multiplication, division, area, graphing, and addition & subtraction strategies. Our students have shown great effort and skill development with these areas of math, and we are so proud of them. We can't wait to see their end of the year growth.

To wrap up our year, 3rd graders get to study Social Studies and Science each day. Each section gets 2 quarters of both classes, and they switch teachers. In S.S., they are studying the various first communities in the U.S.A, and the different types of communities. They have learned about the First Native American, Spanish, and European Communities. In Science, they have studied animal adaptations and changes that affect ecosystems using our new curriculum. They love experimenting and creating. We are very thankful for this new curriculum and all it has to offer. Thank you! We can't wait to see what 2022 has in store for our 3rd graders.

FOURTH GRADE **Cindy Backemeyer** **Alex Welna**

Fourth grade is an important year where students grow in both academics and social development. This is also a year for increased responsibility when it comes to being prepared for projects, homework, and tests. This year we hope and strive for improvement in organization, work ethic, and responsibility.

We often tell the students that the strategies they are developing now are the same skills that will help them become lifelong learners and be successful in whatever career they someday choose.

Reading is essential, as we use it in every subject area. We spend a great deal of our morning building reading fluency to aid students in becoming successful independent readers. Being a proficient reader helps students become strong in all subject areas. We do quarterly fluency reads, and students read aloud often in class. This year we have a new reading curriculum called "Wonders." This new curriculum has a wealth of resources which include, student anthologies, journals, graphic organizers, and weekly readers. To strengthen and evaluate comprehension skills, we also use a program called Accelerated Reader. Students earn points and track the number of words read.

Every quarter students have a point goal to meet. Our goal for the third quarter will be 48 points. Many students are working hard at home and school to reach their goals. Besides independent reading, we are working on novels in small groups and other read-aloud activities. All of this helps to encourage fourth graders to love reading.

By the time you read this letter, we will have completed topic eight in our Envision Mathematics Series. The Envision series encourages students to use modern methods to solve math problems rather than traditional algorithms. Although we use the new techniques, we are also teaching the traditional strategies alongside. The new series helps students grow in their problems solving skills due to the multi-step problems they have to solve each day. This year we have spent a great deal of time practicing multiplication and division facts before we could move on to more difficult concepts. It is "vital" that students have their basic facts memorized. They will use these facts for the rest of their lives and in all future math classes. We also use a math website called IXL. It is a wonderful computer program that helps reinforce the skills we are learning in the classroom. Elmwood-Murdock is lucky to be one-to-one with Chromebooks in fourth grade. We use our Chromebooks to practice keyboarding using a program called Edutyping. This allows us to learn how to keyboard correctly and type without looking at our fingers. Students are using their Chromebooks in many different ways. Students utilize their Chromebooks to review and study for tests using Quizlet, Quizalize, Kahoot, Nearpod, Schoology, and other online tools. We also use Google Docs as a place to type our final draft stories. Google Docs will be a resource students use until 12th grade at Elmwood-Murdock. Students will be using other programs on their Chromebooks, such as Google Slides to make a slideshow for their Native American projects. Other technologies we plan to use this year are iMovie, Photoshop, and the DO INK app, which is a greenscreen tool where students can publish their writing by creating a video. Mr. Dwyer is also an excellent resource for learning new technology concepts and helped us create student avatars.

In Language, all of our lessons this year have focused on the Six Traits of Writing: Ideas, Voice, Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. Four times a week, we do Daily Language Review editing. This helps us find the errors in a sentence and rewrite the sentence correctly. We also do the grammar skills that go with our reading series each week. We are becoming a class of authors and have written three six paragraph essays. All of our stories start with brain-

storming and writing a rough draft. Then, we do editing and a final draft. Students are able to type their final drafts in Google Docs. We also do a great deal of writing in both science and social studies.

Both teachers are excited about the growth we have seen in writing this year and hope for even more to come. We have high expectations for our students. At Elmwood-Murdock, we want our students to have a strong work ethic and become well rounded individuals. We have enjoyed guiding them on their learning journey. Thank you to all the parents for the support they have given us this year. We are so glad to be able to work with you and your child. We can't wait to see even more growth during the second semester.

FIFTH GRADE READING SIXTH GRADE READING & ENGLISH Heather Holub

I'm in my 5th year at Elmwood-Murdock, in which I teach 5th and 6th grade Reading, 6th grade English, along with 5th grade Home-room. The first semester is an adjustment for the fifth-graders, because they now have four teachers' rooms in which they rotate classes with throughout the day. Therefore, students are learning a lot about their organization skills and being responsible with their work; it takes time to figure out how to organize for all the classes.

This year we have a new Language Arts Curriculum, but students have done well adjusting. The fifth and sixth grade Reading classes have been working hard on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills. Students have been writing for a variety of purposes. The second semester will be spent focusing on Prefixes and Suffixes, using context clues, and preparing for the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS English Language Arts) Test.

The fifth and sixth graders have been working hard to reach their reading goal for Accelerated Reader (A.R.). This assesses students' comprehension of books they have read. For the second semester, students will be working extremely hard to get more A.R. points than they had in the first semester. By the end of first semester, each fifth grader's goal is to have 36 points, while the goal for the sixth graders is 40 points. The top 5th grade reader has 163.8 points thus far, and the highest 6th grade reader has 452 points in the first semester. Terrific work reading and keep up the wonderful effort!

When students enter fifth grade, they receive a Chromebook for the first time in their education career to use during the school day. The students are learning how to utilize the Chromebooks and type, along with being accountable for them. They are to take care of the computers, plus are responsible for making sure they are charged. We are very thankful for the Chromebooks!

FIFTH/SIXTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES FIFTH GRADE ENGLISH Luke Dlouhy

The 2021 – 2022 school year has gotten off to a great start. While there are still challenges from the pandemic, it has been fun to return to a more "normal" year.

The 5th grade students have started rotating classes for the first time. It was challenging at first, but the students have done a great job of learning organizational skills so that they are prepared for all of their classes. This will help with their adjustment to junior high, as

they will already have some practice rotating classes.

I have had the privilege of teaching 5th and 6th grade Social Studies, as well as 5th grade English, for five years now. In 5th grade Social Studies, the students have been learning about America's early history. We recently learned about the original 13 colonies and what life would have been like for the colonists during this time period. As we continue, we will be learning about the American Revolution and important events following the Revolution.

The 6th grade Social Studies class is focused on World History, and the students have enjoyed learning about early civilizations throughout the world. In Unit 1, we learned about the Fertile Crescent, Nile River Valley, Indus River Valley, and Huang He River Valley. In Unit 2, we have been learning about Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. The students have found Greece and Rome to be particularly interesting, and we are excited to continue learning about different civilizations throughout the world.

The 5th grade English class has been working hard to improve their grammar skills. We have been learning about subjects and predicates, compound and complex sentences, different kinds of nouns, and prepositional phrases. In the second semester, we will focus on verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

As we move into the new year, I am excited to watch the 5th and 6th grade students continue to learn and grow. They have already grown so much since the beginning of the year, and I look forward to seeing that continue as we move through the second half of the school year.

FIFTH/SIXTH GRADE SCIENCE FIFTH GRADE COMPUTER Monte Frerichs

It has been a great year in the 6th grade. The 6th graders have been working hard on keeping our school safe, being responsible, being respectful, and being their best. It is always a big step for students as they begin their last year at the elementary school and start working toward the transition to Junior High. The students have classes in different rooms and also have different teachers throughout the day. I teach 5th and 6th grade Science and 5th grade Computer.

In 5th grade Science the students have completed units on Structures and Properties of Matter and Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems.

In 6th grade Science the students have completed units on Energy, Motion, and Structure and Function of Cells and parts that make up Cells.

In 5th grade Computer the most important thing that students learn is how to use technology appropriately. I teach lessons on how to be a good digital citizen and how to be safe using technology. The students have had a variety of practice with different programs. We started off the year with keyboarding and continue to work on our speed and accuracy. We also work with a program called Moby Max, that allows students extra practice in all subject areas and at all levels of learning. We will continue to grow with technology as our digital world grows.

As we begin 2022 we will continue to strive for high achievement. Along with lofty academic goals, the 6th grade has high expectations for good character. We believe that having good character traits will mold us into

model citizens and set us up for success in the future.

FIFTH/SIXTH MATH Robin Kuhlman

The school year is flying by! I am blessed with another great group of students who are excited to learn and challenge themselves to get better every day.

One of the most exciting times of the year for a child is Christmas. Getting gifts is exciting. However, *giving* gifts is exciting too! The 5th & 6th-grade classes work with a local church to provide gifts for Operation Santa. We purchase, wrap and donate gifts for children in our community. It is so good to give and to help others!!

The 5th-grade math class completed units on multiplying and dividing with whole numbers and decimals and with adding and subtracting fractions. To begin the second semester the student will learn to multiply and divide fractions. We will then work with data analysis, geometry, coordinate planes and algebra concepts.

The 6th-grade math class is embracing the challenge of learning algebra concepts. They have learned about positive rational numbers, integers, algebraic expressions, how to represent and solve equations, and graphing inequalities. Second semester will be spent learning about rates, ratios, percent, geometry and data analysis. I am proud of their positive attitude and willingness to learn new things.

6th-grade students have taken time to study the *7 Habits of Successful Teens*. They have learned to be responsible for their own actions, to take ownership in their work, set short term and long term goals, prioritize work that needs to be accomplished first, listen to understand others, teamwork and leadership. It awesome to see the students develop these skills throughout the year.

The 6th-grade students are learning programming skills and problems solving strategies by using Code.org and Dash Robots. They have been working with algorithms, debugging, looping, and more!

MATH INTERVENTION ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION Curt Backemeyer

This is the fourth year of our Math Intervention program entitled "Math Advantage" at the Elementary School. This program is currently serving 22 students as a supplement to regular math instruction in grades k-6. Total numbers are down from last year as we are able to combine students in another section of their grade and meet more frequently during the week. Students qualify for the "Do the Math" curriculum based on Measures of Academic Performance (MAPs) scores, which are given in the fall, winter, and spring. The curriculum consists of 13 modules ranging from basic number concepts to fractions and presents many hands-on activities along with alternative strategies to help improve math skills. Progress is monitored through assessments at the end of each lesson in addition to assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of each module.

In elementary Physical Education this year we continue to utilize our SPARK curriculum. In grades k-2 we have completed units in Building a Foundation, Recess games, Dribbling-Volleying-Striking, Parachute, and Manipulatives. Units for grades 3-6 have included Softball/Baseball, Aerobic Games,

Volleyball, Chasing and Fleeing. Football, Fitness Challenges, and Flying Disc. We continue to emphasize healthy lifestyles through staying active and eating a balanced diet. Respecting others is a point of emphasis through cooperating and showing good sportsmanship. Strategies for resolving conflicts on a small, medium, and large level have been discussed and reviewed when conflicts occasionally arise.

SPECIAL EDUCATION READING ADVANTAGE Keri Hogue

In my classroom, I am always doing many different activities and approaching learning in a variety of ways. This year I still try many strategies with teaching; however, I spend the majority of my time in the regular classrooms. It has been an interesting learning experience for both myself and the students. Over the last nine years of teaching at Elmwood-Murdock, you would find me in my classroom most of the day with an individual or small group. This year, my "classroom" is a rolling cart with all of my materials for the day in the different classrooms I serve.

This year, I do cooperative teaching in the second and third grade classrooms. We typically do weekly team meetings, look at the scope and sequence of the curriculum for the next two or three weeks, and make a plan. Our planning includes a broad approach to what skills we are implementing along with addressing needs of students in small groups to help them be successful. This is typical for all of our classroom teachers, but my role is more specific with the planning as I work with groups in the classroom, help teach the whole group with the classroom teachers, and do less pull out of individuals or small groups.

I also continue to serve in the kindergarten and fourth grade classrooms for different content areas which keeps the day interesting and always new. I help with the Reading Advantage program and help students and their reading fluency from kindergarten to the fifth grade. Regardless of how I am supporting the different classrooms, the ultimate goal is to help students find the best success by staying in the classroom and having access to the full curriculum.

One of the biggest advantages for myself with cooperative teaching, is I am able to work with much more of our student population and help them succeed and grow not just in the classroom but throughout all of their educational career in the elementary! It makes me proud to say at Elmwood-Murdock, every day is a great day to be a Knight.

ELEMENTARY SPECIAL EDUCATION Bryce Chudomelka

The first semester of 2021 was a fresh start for all of our students. After all the difficulties given to students over the past few semesters, this year seemed like a new beginning. It was also a new beginning for the Special Education Program in 5th and 6th grade. Elmwood-Murdock has a strong sense of community, and we wanted our classrooms to reflect that at the Elementary School. To make this happen, we needed to make sure all students were included in the classroom for every class, every day. So, we decided to change how we taught students with extra needs.

To make this change, we needed extra help in the classroom. With the help of paraprofessionals and classroom teachers, we were able to make sure there was this extra help in the classrooms. Special education teachers have been working with all teachers to find the best way to support all of our students. Co-teaching is when multiple teachers are in a classroom making sure all students can achieve success. Often times, the general education teacher is teaching a lesson, while the special education teacher assists students that need more help. Accommodations are sometimes made to assignments to help all students learn the grade level material. Students have adapted very well to the new style of sometimes having multiple teachers, or paraprofessionals, in the classroom with them.

Students not only benefit academically from this inclusion, but socially as well. Students need to be with their classmates. Social interactions are a large part of education, and we should not prohibit them from having these interactions. With all students in the classroom, they are able to work with each other in pairs or groups that were not available to them before. Students are benefitting in many ways from the inclusion model that is being used.

As the year progresses, the Special Education Program will continue to work to make sure all students have the opportunity to achieve success. The entire Elementary staff continues to adapt and make sure each student is in the best learning environment possible. I look forward to a wonderful second semester!

TITLE 1 READING READING ADVANTAGE Stephanie Smith

Being a Title I Reading and Reading Advantage teacher is very rewarding. It is so encouraging to see growth week-to-week and help students track their own progress as they meet personal reading goals. I want to help students foster a love of reading and build confidence. We celebrate all successes in my room-big and small. I am using more whole-brain style teaching techniques to incorporate hands-on experiences into the students' lessons to make content meaningful and stick with them longer.

Students in my groups work on a variety of reading skills throughout their time with me, and we continue to spiral and build upon those topics as we progress. The younger students are busy working on letter identification, phonemic awareness, letter/sound correspondence activities, spelling, and digraphs. Once those concepts are satisfactory, students can progress to harder digraphs, vowel teams, blends, fluency/expression, spelling, comprehension skills and more. I am thankful for the students I get to work with, and the enjoyment I get to see when they grow as readers. Keep up the hard work, and keep on reading!

FAMILY READING NIGHT Stephanie Smith

"Lights, Camera, Read!" was the theme of our Family Reading Night this year, which was open to all elementary students. Over 80 children were able to attend this year with their families, which was a wonderful sight to see! Every student who came was able to leave with a free book to read with their family. Additionally, every family that came received a packet of activities and ideas to use at home that correlate with what is being taught in the classrooms.

We had three rooms led by the elementary Student Council members. Thank you to those Student Council students who volunteered their time. They were great role models to the younger students in attendance.

Each room centered around the "Lights, Camera, Read" theme. The 4th grade Student Council members helped students practice sight words in a fun game of "POP!". The 5th grade Student Council members taught their room about story elements, provided a fun movie snack, and showed students how to listen to and read good books on YouTube. The 6th grade Student Council members put their acting skills to the test to perform the fairy tale "The 3 Little Pigs" for everyone in attendance, and then led everyone in a craft to make their own puppets to retell the story at home.

The point of this night is really to help foster a love of reading for students by giving them real-life experiences to go with the stories they are reading. This night helps to show students that reading is not just a school-time activity, but rather, something the whole family can enjoy together. Thank you to all the staff who helped make this a success and to all the families that came out to help support this event.

LIFE SKILLS/TRANSITION April Bacon

We provide a strong classroom management program and structure to increase student academic achievement by decreasing behavior concerns. Although the classroom is very structured we provide flexibility to help the students feel comfortable and safe at school. Many times, setting expectations and having a safe zone for students creates a positive learning environment in all parts of the building.

This year the life skills program is using intervention programs for math and language arts. Both intervention programs blend personalized, online learning with teacher directed instruction to empower struggling learners to close the learning gap between themselves and their peers. The goal is always for students to mainstream back into the general education classes. For the students who are not able to do so, our goal is to teach students at their current educational level to help them with confidence and motivation to learn.

This year looks a little different than past years. I spend most of my day as an added support in the regular education classroom. This allows students to become introduced to the same academic subjects as their peers. Student work is then modified to their academic level. Students can learn alongside of their peers but still have the confidence to complete the work at their current academic level. Also, being in the classroom sets high expectations for all students.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL SCIENCE Don Brothers

As classes are winding down for the first semester everyone is working hard on woods projects, College welds and building model houses.

The Building construction class has finished all of their drafting in class and are working on a scaled model house from their drafting plans. They have finished the framework and are now doing the Windows and doorways on the houses.

Welders are busy working finishing their final test welds for college credit through Southeast Community College. The students are working on various welding projects in the lab. Second semester will be as busy as some will be taking college welding and in-

dependent welding classes in Mig and Tig during the semester.

The Architectural Drafting students are using a Chief Architect program to design and build homes of various styles. They have designed ranch homes, Commercial Business, Log houses and beach houses just to name a few.

Our Technology 7 students have been busy this quarter building mousetraps cars and are currently building wooden shelves they designed in class. They have cut their materials, sanded and stained. They are currently in the middle of assembly and clear coating. They should be bringing home their projects the last week of the Semester.

Technology 8 students finished their Drafting section of the class and are currently also working on their woods projects. They all have been doing a great job on their projects and will be bringing them home this week or before the end of the Quarter

MATH **Travis Brewer**

9th and 10th grade geometry students have learned many concepts so far such as: tools of geometry, reasoning, proofs, parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent triangles, and relationships inside triangles. My geometry classes have been using an online math website called IXL to strengthen their math skills throughout the school year. IXL meets the unique needs of each learner with individualized guidance. We have focused on being able to effectively use protractors and compasses. In class we have done many different types of constructions using these tools.

These constructions would include: Copying angles, bisecting angles, constructing parallel lines, constructing perpendicular lines, and constructing the circumcenter. This semester we also have been working on two-column proofs. Proofs promote a higher level of thinking. Proofs aren't just ways to show that your statements are true or valid. They help to confirm a student's true understanding of rules, theorems, and hypotheses that we talk about in class. They also confirm how and why geometry helps explain our world and how it all works. When students learn how to prove concepts, they are tapping into a deeper stage of mathematics. I am looking forward to a great 2nd semester, where in geometry we will be learning about quadrilaterals, proportions, trigonometry, transformations, symmetry, circles, areas of polygons, surface area, volume, probability, and measurement.

7th and 8th grade pre-algebra students have learned many different concepts as well. These concepts would include: tools of algebra, operations with integers, operations with rational numbers, expressions and equations, multi-step equations, and inequalities. My pre-algebra classes have been using an online math website called IXL to strengthen their math skills throughout the school year. IXL meets the unique needs of each learner with individualized guidance. Pre-Algebra students have been focusing on developing fluency with rational numbers and proportional relationships. Students have been applying mathematical skills and are making meaningful connections to their real-life experiences. We have had a strong focus 1st semester on working with fractions, mixed numbers, and decimals. We have estimated, simplified, solved single and multi-step equations, solved single and multi-step inequalities, and converted units using decimals, fractions, and mixed numbers. The students have been working diligently on using variables and

solving variable expressions, performing operations with integers, graphing points on a coordinate plane, solve problems by looking for a pattern, and using the distributive property. I am looking forward to 2nd semester in pre-algebra where we will be learning about ratios, proportions, percent's, linear functions, graphing, powers, triangles, distance, angles, surface area, volume, statistics and probability.

Extended Math-Students in extended math have the opportunity to improve on their math skills and abilities that they learned in their regular math classes. Students in this class have been using prodigy math. Prodigy math is a web-based math program that is aligned to the common core state standards. Prodigy will motivate students at all levels with prodigy math games that uses an adaptive learning platform. Prodigy also engages students as they explore the prodigy math game world, where they answer math questions to complete quests and earn in-game rewards. Prodigy also helps students to interpret and understand what the question is asking. I use prodigy to help prompt a deeper understand of the underlying math principles to ensure students learn to apply the new knowledge. Another online program that I have been using this year is Delta math. In Delta math students get unlimited practice. The math problems are randomized, allowing for students to get multiple opportunities to the practice and feedback they need. In Delta math students get instant feedback. It goes beyond right and wrong. As soon as a student submits an answer, they get a detailed age-appropriate explanation. This is also a class where students can get help on their math homework and IXL that they received in their regular math class.

ENGLISH **Hayley Block**

Freshman English is busy as always. First Quarter we completed our first novel, Anthem by Ayn Rand, together. This led to many great discussions about the idea of Collectivism vs. Individuality. We have explored short stories and poems like Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder" and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven." The Past Month or so we have been working our way through Classical Mythology and the Odyssey, which we should finish this January.

8th Grade English has been working on the Elements of Literature by reading both fiction and non-fiction texts over the course of the first semester. Some class favorites were the very creepy stories, "The Monkey's Paw" and "The Land Lady." Students also completed an independent book project over the course of six weeks. We are finishing up our Poetry Unit by compiling all the poems we have written into a single book. We are getting ready to start an historical fiction novel, My Brother Sam is Dead by Christopher Collier and James Lincoln Collier.

7th Grade English is going well. We started the first quarter with some short stories that always well received like "Rikki Tikki Tavi" and the spooky "Three Skeleton Key." We also read a screenplay from the Twilight Zone called "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street." In the second Quarter, we started a novel together called "The Westing game." We are having a great time reading this murder mystery and keeping track of clues to figure out who did it.

In Speech (10th Grade) class this semester, we have worked on becoming more comfortable with being in front of our peers and presenting. Our big presentations have been a How-to speech, an informational, and a per-

suasive speech. One of the favorite things in class was our impromptu speech game. Students will randomly pick a number and get assigned a topic. They then had one minute to prepare what to say, and then present. It is always fun to hear what students come up with. We rounded out the semester with a ScreenCast project, which is a technology driven How-to presentation.

SPANISH CLASS **Manuel Camina**

"BIENVENIDOS A ESPAÑOL." This year we have four different levels of Spanish. We have three groups of Spanish I. One of them is big and one of them a really small one. We are learning all the basic stuff, how verbs work in Spanish, how to describe someone, school subjects and items we use and how to express what we like and what we don't like. We even created a song!!

In Spanish II we have two awesome groups. We get a little deeper in Spanish grammar and we have been learning "the boot" verbs, the past tenses, and the direct and indirect objects. We are learning not only language, but things people do in Spanish speaking countries.

In Spanish III classes, most of the time we are speaking just Spanish and students can have conversations with me. We even enjoy reading about "La tomatina", and we play games like "Codigo Secreto" "Timeline" or "Scattergories". We had the chance to go to watch "Encanto" in Omaha. This group really shows they want to learn and use a new language and that makes that class really easy to enjoy.

We also have three groups of exploratory Spanish. Seventh graders take it and it is fun. We are learning basic vocabulary, playing bingo and hangman, and researching about Spanish speaking countries. During the first weeks we had a transition class where we all learned a lot.

MATH **Noah Fisher**

I am extremely excited to have students in this year's classes. All classes have been productive and are striving to grow in their knowledge of mathematics.

Geometry students are on a blistering pace for this year and we will be able to incorporate some extra concepts and projects in the second semester. They have been a hard working group of kids and things have moved along great this year.

Algebra 2 as always has been a joy to teach. We have incorporated quite a bit of real world math concepts to put students into the best possible situation going forward beyond high school. The students show up willing to learn and actively participate in the learning process through in class discussion.

Calculus has been a whirlwind adventure for the students that decided to take it this year. They are exploring similar concepts in deeper manner than just what a given problem is asking. Overall, it is a challenging class and for the most part the seniors are embracing the challenge.

Pre-Calculus has been a great group of kids that are willing to learn the newer concepts. Often, we revolve around the things that were learned in Algebra 2, but dig deeper and expand on the concepts.

Overall, this year has been going well, and my hope is that it continues in the same fash-

ion and we can have a wonderful second semester.

VOCAL MUSIC **Mindy Graff**

It has been my pleasure to continue to get know the students, families and staff at Elmwood-Murdock! Elementary music classes have been focusing on creating music through singing, listening, movement, and playing basic rhythmic and melodic instruments. In addition, the elementary students prepared music selections for their annual Christmas program. They all sang with joy putting on a very festive K-3 and 4-6th grade Christmas Program! When we return from break some grades will begin working on units that involve Orff instruments, and some grades will work with a fretted instrument; learning the ukulele! Finally, in the elementary we had a group of 4th and 5th graders try out for an honor choir. Every other year the Nebraska Music Educators Association hosts a Children's Allstate Choir comprised of 4-5 grade students from across the state. This year we had a handful of 4th and 5th grade students audition for this opportunity. Three of our students Chloe Mattison, Kate Stock, and Stormie Houck were selected to attend in Lincoln on Nov. 17th. They prepared seven songs of all genres and performed in the Lied Center on UNL's Campus. They sang with about 240 selected students from across Nebraska. All of the Elmwood-Murdock students that auditioned will perform one song together for our spring program. The next children's All State Choir will happen in 2023.

In 7-8th grade choir, they have been working on beginning choir skills, vocal technique (as a choir and individually), and community building within the group. The group picked up on part singing fairly quickly and has grown in ability and confidence. They performed 4 pieces at the 7-12 Christmas Concert and will begin music for Malcolm contest after break. This year we hope to take solos and small groups again as well as our full choir (depending on contest protocols).

In the 9-12th grade choir, we have a small but hard-working group this year. As a smaller group, many choir students are learning to be flexible with part singing; kindly learning different voice parts then normally assigned. This however has made us stronger as a whole as it teaches them to look more at how the parts of choir music go together! We worked on musical theater pieces at the beginning and all participated in the ECNC honor choir; singing pieces from all genres. The high school choir performed a beautiful selection for the Veteran's program and performed 4 pieces at their annual Christmas Concert. The 9-12 choir will begin music for District Music Contest after break and work on small group and large group selections!

This year in November for both the 7-8 choir and 9-12 choir, it was my pleasure to host the ECNC Honor Choir at Murdock. From EM 14 Jr. high and 10 high school students participated with about two hundred other selected singers from our conference. We had two guest clinicians Mark Harman (Fremont Public Schools) and Molly Gonring (Elkhorn South) work with all selected students that culminated with an evening performance! The honor choir performed about 6-7 songs each as a 7-8th grade choir and 9-12th grade choir to a packed house in the Murdock gym! It was such a great opportunity and wonderful to hear the gym so full of beautiful live music! Thank you for continuing to support the arts in your community!

STUDY SKILLS 7 **Peggy Guenther**

Yes, even the process of studying should be taught! For many students, poor grades are not always a lack of desire; but, a lack of basic study skills and the inability to organize. Students also must learn how to ask questions and seek assistance when needed. In study skills we cover the four most effective study strategies essential for all students. These include: note-taking strategies, summarizing strategies, research strategies, and test-taking strategies. We also prompt and encourage students to ask for help with academics and organization ideas. We practice these skills daily so the skills can be generalized to every subject. Students learn how to learn.

EXTENDED READING **Peggy Guenther**

Students in Extended Reading class have the opportunity to improve and enhance their ability to "read to learn". The students learn how to interpret written directions, make inferences, use transition words, and locate material within the written text.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE **Peggy Guenther**

Students with an Individual Education Plan, are given specialized academic and social support to assist them in reaching their goals. Instruction may be administered within the content classroom, in small groups, or individually. The goal is to teach students meta-cognitive skills that will empower them to achieve success. Whether at school or at home, organization and practice are key components to success. You can help your student continue to practice at home using these tips:

Tips for helping with schoolwork

- Show an interest in your child's homework. Inquire about the subjects and the work to be done. Ask questions that require answers longer than one or two words.
- Help your child organize homework materials before beginning.
- Establish a regular time with your child to do homework-developing a schedule helps avoid procrastination.
- Find a specific place for your child to do homework that has lots of light, quiet, and plenty of work space.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and search for answers, taking the time to figure out correct answers.
- Make sure your child backs up answers with facts and evidence.
- Practice school-taught skills at home.
- Relate homework to your child's everyday life. For instance, teach fractions and measurements as you prepare a favorite food together.
- Be a role model-take the opportunity to read a book or newspaper or write a letter while your child studies. Praise your child for both the small steps and big leaps in the right direction. (LD Basics Parent T[ips]. Retrieved December 16, 2020, from http://www.1donline.org/article/Being_an_Efficient_Homework_Helper%3A_Turning_a_Chore_into_a_Challenge)

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH **Garrett Hall**

It has been another exciting and challenging semester in the English department at Elmwood-Murdock high school. It is always great to get to know the new students and

parents throughout the year. I enjoy taking on new challenges and working with students as we move forward in our exploration of English and literature.

In AMEX the juniors are continuing to move through the history of American Literature. This year, we are using a new textbook and online supplement. We recently finished reading about Civil War Literature and at the start of the new semester we will read literature from the World War One time period. We will also have a few class novels (The Great Gatsby and As I Lay Dying) that we will read together. The readings and writing assignments that we do should help prepare us for the ACT this spring.

The sophomores have been hard at work on various essays and assignments this year. They have recently completed the unit on Hamlet and finished the grammar test for the year. Next semester we will start reading classic American novels like To Kill A Mockingbird and Of Mice and Men.

The seniors that I have this year have been working hard in Composition and will be starting the challenging Modern Fiction class in the second semester. I have been pleased with how hard all of the students have been working on their homework and classes this year. I am happy to be a dual credit instructor for Southeast Community College. I think the dual-credit classes that we offer are a great opportunity for our students.

Finally, I want to take a second and discuss the European History and Creative Writing classes. The classes were added to the course catalogue two years ago. European History started with the cradle of civilization and the Stone Age and should end on the formation of the European Union towards the end of the second semester. The Creative Writing class has recently finished their first short story portfolio of the year and will continue to work on bigger and better projects as the year continues.

I am very happy to have the support of students and the community in our endeavors, and I look forward to the coming semester.

BAND **Mike Hanson**

This year has been a very musical year so far. We have maintained numbers in the Elementary and Jr. High Band, displayed very good test scores, and performed well at Applejack to show for our continued time and work. Beginning with the 5th Grade Band; this year we have 24 aspiring, eager students enrolled in the 5th grade band and 22 in the 6th Band. We have almost a perfect balance of instrumentation with the elementary 5-6th band, which will help to produce a mature sound with the band in the future. The elementary has performed at two concerts including Grandparent's Day and the Winter Concert. We are excited how the elementary have improved this year and look forward to their future in the program. Thanks to the students that practice after school.

The Jr. High Band has maintained a solid number of 40 students with a continued balanced instrumentation. We have had several performances this year and continue to prepare for various community and school related performances. We are spending a great deal of time working on improving the students ability to read and to produce a high quality tone and adjust their sound to make the best sound possible without teacher intervention, which is a skill that takes a great deal of higher order thinking skills. This year we are focusing on sectional work and repeti-

tion to develop individual skills while in the large ensemble setting. Several students auditioned for the Wayne Honor Band and we will post results to the website.

The High School Band continues to play at a high level despite the smaller numbers. We are 32-student strong and have a very good balance as far as instrumentation. In April of 2018 the Band earned a Superior (Plaque) at District Contest. We have competed several times and earned 4th place at the Applejack Parade, we placed 17 out of 35 in Class C at the Harvest of Harmony Parade. We have been and are preparing for various concert band performances including the Veteran's Day performance, Winter Concert and our upcoming Fundraising Concert in February with a "Night at the Movies" for the concert.

Individually, we are continuing to see many students shine musically as well. Many students auditioned or will for the Wayne State Honor Band, Class C State Honor Band, and ECNC Honor Band.

Thank you to the school board for approving our annual budget and repairing many school instruments for the school year. We purchased a new baritone and two French horns over the past 3 years. In the next couple of years we will be replacing older school owned instruments to modernize our instrument inventory which on average the instruments are over 30 years old. We thank all of the community support of the Band program and will continue to strive for excellence in music and academics in the Elmwood-Murdock Band Program.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE **Lisa Hynes**

Foods, Nutrition and Wellness

Students have been busy learning about cooking. The semester began by preparing for cooking labs. The students learned about kitchen and food safety. They learned basic kitchen skills, cooking terminology, and about the equipment used in cooking. Our current unit is baking. The students have been busy learning about quick breads and cakes. Cupcake War style competitions were held for a week in December. The students created cupcakes and a display using an assigned theme and a secret ingredient of the teachers choice.

After we return from break we will be learning more about nutrition and making dishes that contain meats, vegetables, fruits, vegetables and dairy.

Life Skills/C4C

Our goal in C4C is to introduce students to the world of work. Students have explored 16 different career clusters. Each student researched and wrote a paper, after picking a career that interests them. In addition, students practiced completing a job application. Our semester ended with a unit on Personal Finance. We covered savings and interest, credit cards, checking accounts, and paychecks. In the personal finance unit, students learned to read a paycheck stub, keep a checkbook register and balance a checking account. We also focused on responsible use of credit.

Parenting

We began the semester learning about family structure and function as well as the responsibilities of parenting. The parenting experience has been enhanced with the use of the school's Real Care Babies. Students participated in the Read Care Baby Think It Over simulation by parenting a life-like baby doll for 72 hours. Recently, we have followed the life-cycle from conception to birth. This

semester we were able to visit the Preschool in Elmwood to read to the preschool students. Students were able to feel what being pregnant during the third trimester feels like through the use of the pregnancy simulator belly. Many of the students chose to wear the simulator belly throughout the day to have an idea of what it is like to be nine months pregnant.

FCS 8- 8th Grade

Students explored the textiles and sewing area of FCS to start the quarter. They learned about caring for their clothes and completed a laundry homework assignment. Students also gained experience on the sewing machines by sewing a pillowcase.

During the second half of the quarter students explored the interpersonal relationships area of FCS. Students learned about themselves as we discussed self-concept, personality, values, and goals. We then take that foundation to explore how those characteristics impact relationships and affect communication with each other.

Exploratory FCS 7th Grade

Students in this exploratory class get a small taste of some of the different areas of FCS curriculum. This quarter students learned about foods, nutrition, and practiced basic cooking skills. They also had lessons about table setting and table manners. They were also introduced to child development and care in a babysitting unit. Students learned about being a responsible babysitter, how to engage children in activities and how to handle emergencies. Our school nurse was a wonderful asset in helping to teach basic first aid that a babysitter needs to know.

10-12 SPECIAL EDUCATION **Nichole Justesen**

Special education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. Special education is provided at no cost to parents and includes the related services a student needs to access her/his educational program. In grades 10-12, we begin to transition students for life after high school. Greater emphasis is placed on education goals and their impact on post-secondary plans, self-advocacy and time management skills. Students with disabilities require self-advocacy characteristics and skills for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education. Developing self-understanding will help student's plan goals for themselves. Students with exceptionalities should reflect on their situations which will thereby develop self-awareness. Students who gain and develop a greater understanding of their own needs gain confidence to recognize their abilities. This will allow students to set realistic goals for themselves and provide direction in their post-secondary plans. It is important for students to be able to voice their opinion, address concerns, as well as, develop learning strategies for setting goals, time management and problem solving.

One of our focus points this year is improving students decoding skills. The definition of decoding is the "process of breaking down a word to its individual parts and determining its word's pronunciation based on the common sound/letter patterns of English (Reading Horizons, 2019). Two decoding strategies that can help students find success are as follows:

One guardian consonant following the vowel, that consonant will move on to the next syllable.

When a vowel is followed by two guardian consonants, the consonants will split. The first consonant will stay in

the first syllable, and the second consonant will move on the next syllable.

BIOLOGY/LIFE SCIENCE/ANATOMY **Justin Moline**

Biology classes have focused on understanding the scientific method, conversions, and structure and function in organisms. Students studied cell structures, energy, reproduction, differentiation, homeostasis, DNA structure and its importance for controlling cellular activity. The overarching structure and function theme has guided many of our investigations into the growth and development of organisms. Inquiry skills have been practiced during investigations associated with an enzyme activity, matter and energy cycling in the environment, and structure and function.

The 7th grade Life Science classes have discussed the scientific process, compounds, cells, and organ systems of the body. Students have focused on the classification, organization, and relationships within these important concepts. The unit regarding cells included an understanding of sub-cellular structures, cellular functions, and exploratory labs using microscopes. We are currently investigating the organization, functions, and relationships of the different organ systems in the human body. Inquiry skills have been the focus of lab investigations for heart rate during different activities, measuring and comparing nutrients provided by certain foods, and lung capacity comparisons and analysis. Other topics that will be discussed throughout the school year include DNA and genetics, ecosystems and environmental studies, adaptations and relationships, behavior, and the classification system.

Anatomy examines the structures and functions of each organ system of the human body, and the complex interactions necessary to keep the body functioning properly. The first semester has included studies of cells, tissues, the integumentary system, and the skeletal system. The objectives of anatomy include gaining a fundamental knowledge of the location of different parts of the body, understanding the functions necessary to maintain homeostasis, examining the effects of external factors on the body, and investigating relationships between body structures. Research topics have included information regarding diseases and disorders, and unique characteristics of different body systems and structures. We are currently discussing components and functions of the endocrine system, and its relationship to other organ systems in maintaining homeostasis.

LIBRARY **JoDee Paulsen**

They say the key to happiness is finding something you love and make a career out of it. I can tell you without hesitation that that is absolutely true!! Being the district Library Media Specialist gives me the opportunity to take my love of reading and my love of teaching and create the best possible job. I love that I get to be a small part of every single student's education from the kiddos in preschool to the seniors. I get to watch them grow as readers and get to celebrate their many successes with them in reading and in other endeavors.

I also love that students, teachers and parents see me as a resource for their students' growth as a reader. I thought this year I would address some of the frequently asked questions I get throughout the year.

What is AR? AR stands for Accelerated Reader. It is a program that is

very near and dear to my heart. We implemented this program many years ago because we were looking for a way to encourage our students to read independently. Our tests scores always showed we had great readers, but we weren't seeing kids read for enjoyment. This program allows students to read a book and then take a test over what they have read. If they pass the test with 60% or higher, they are awarded points. These points add up to prizes and recognition. This year the program added articles that students in grades 3 and up can read and test on. These articles have been very popular with kids.

Why do you tell your student that books are like pants? I use this a lot with my second and third graders. There is usually a bigger divide in reading abilities around this time. Some kids are reluctant to start reading, but they see that their classmates are reading really big books and they want to also. I try to teach them that all of us read at our own level—just like all of us wear different sizes. We need to find books that are the right fit so we don't become overly frustrated trying to read books that are too hard, but we also need to size up when things get a little too comfortable.

What can I do to help my child love to read? This is a question I have asked myself as a mother. The only answer I have is to share the love of reading with your child. Most often the kids who don't love to read are the ones who are not confident. Just because they don't love to read, doesn't mean they can't learn to love books. Read to your child. Read with your child. Accept that there are many ways of reading—you can listen to an audiobook, students can read pictures and sometimes they retell stories they have heard. This is all important steps to loving reading. Also, don't get hung up on levels and allow students to read with their passions and interests.

When kids ask me for recommendations, I often ask them to tell me about their favorite television shows or movies. If all they like to watch is sports—then obviously I need to find them some sports books. If they like cartoons then usually graphic novels are the place to go.

What are your thoughts on graphic novels? Personally, I think we are blessed to have a huge variety of books available to our children and graphic novels are a blessing to many students. Students who struggle with comprehension tend to be visual learners need pictures to help them comprehend the book, just as they need graphics and charts in their text book. Graphic novels also introduce students to higher vocabulary levels than other books and when that vocabulary is paired with pictures—students understand the context, which in turn helps them across curriculum. I feel that students should be allowed to read for enjoyment. If that means they are reading mostly graphic novels, I am fine with that. I do, however, appreciate when students challenge themselves once in a while.

What days are you at each school?

While I love getting to work with all the kids—I have to split my time be-

tween the buildings. I am in Murdock all day on Mondays and on Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00 to the end of the day. The rest of the time I am in Elmwood teaching classes to the elementary. If a student needs me on one of the days I am not in their building—the best way to get ahold of me is through Schoology or SeeSaw. Both programs have message portals that link right up to my email.

7-12 HEALTH/PE Aaron Pryor

The Health and Physical Education Department at Elmwood-Murdock Junior/Senior High School aims to provide students the opportunities to gain the knowledge, tools, and skills to be physically fit individuals for the rest of their lives.

Classes include: 7th Grade PE/Health, 8th Grade PE/Health, PE II, PE III, and PE IV.

7th and 8th Grade PE/Health

During the 2021-22 school year, the 7th and 8th Grade students are spending time in both the gym as well as the Health classroom. Topics covered in Health include: Your Total Health, Health Risks/Behaviors, Decision Making, Goal Setting, Skeletal/Muscular Systems, Creating Fitness Plans, Nutrition, and Meal Planning, Mental and Emotional Health, Managing Stress, How Tobacco Affects the Body, The Respiratory System, Tobacco/E-Cigarette Use, as well as Refusal Skills. The 8th Grade students also have an opportunity to learn about various weightlifting exercises as well as the proper technique needed to perform them safely and correctly while heading to the Fitness Center once a week.

In the gym, points of emphasis include: cooperative team skills, strategic communication, and sportsmanship, as well as full participation in the large group setting. Students have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sport and fitness based units. They also participate in a variety of daily warm-up activities from dynamic stretching to plyometrics and agility.

PE II, PE III, and PE IV

The classes offered to High School students cover a wide range of fitness concepts, games, activities, and weight training. Once again, our goal is to provide these students with the opportunities to explore a variety of things to help them become physically knowledgeable individuals as they move forward with their lives.

Our PE II class participates in a variety of both sports based as well as team cooperative games. This class is also building on the introductory weight training skills they've learned in the past as we are progressing through a weight lifting program in the Fitness Center twice a week. This balance provides a well-rounded introductory physical education experience at the High School level.

The PE III class provides students the opportunities to learn about and participate in a variety of individual, team, and lifetime sports. The curriculum aims to introduce games to students and give them the opportunities to practice the skills they will need to fully participate in the activity. PE III also includes a weekly trip to the Fitness Center.

PE IV is our Strength and Conditioning class that takes place in the Fitness Center. Students participate in our Knight Power Weightlifting program. Students track their

daily progress on log sheets that detail their daily workout. Core lifts such as: Bench Press, Squat, and Hang Clean are supplemented with auxiliary lifts to increase overall strength. Students test out multiple times throughout the school year and also complete Mid-Semester Progress Checks in which they examine their workouts, looking for trends, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY Laura Rikli

COMPUTER 7

Computer 7 students have been working towards improving their keyboarding technique, speed and accuracy throughout the semester. Students have been completing lessons through EduTyping and taking timed writing tests to gauge improvements in both their speed and accuracy. The 7th grade class also learns how to key, format, and proofread various business documents during the last few weeks of the semester.

COMPUTER 8

Students have been learning basic computer terminology while also working on various projects using Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Canva, and Google Drive (Docs, Drawings, Forms and Slides). They have also learned how to create and properly format various documents such as tables of content, tabs, tables, and outlines.

INFO TECH 1

The 9th grade class has spent the 1st semester working on assignments that apply basic and advanced features of Word & Excel. They have advanced their skills in Word and Excel by applying the basic skills they learned in 7th and 8th grade and taking them to advanced levels with newer, more challenging tools and methods. Next semester they will learn how to create a database and run queries & reports using Microsoft Access. They will also learn how to perform a mail merge by integrating Word & Access. Students will also learn basic and advanced features of Power Point. Finally, they will end the school year by working on several fun projects in Adobe Photoshop.

DIGITAL DESIGN & MEDIA

This semester students have been creating multimedia projects using the Adobe Creative Suite software. Students spent the first semester learning advanced design tools in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Next semester they will learn how to create and edit videos in Adobe Premiere Pro while using Adobe After Effects to enhance the videos with animated video, background and text effects. Students will also learn how to build websites with Wix and create animations using Adobe Animate and Character Animator.

PERSONAL FINANCE

In this quarter class, the seniors have been learning about the skills necessary for financial independence after high school. Topics covered in this class are: transportation, housing, budgeting & consumerism, credit, and insurance. Students are engaged through various projects such as housing & apartment search activities; paper vs. spreadsheet budgets; generic vs. name brand consumerism activities; and understanding how to analyze credit card offers and credit reports.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS / YEAR-BOOK

Students in this class have learned how to design their own Yearbook spreads using the Walsworth publishing site. They are responsible for taking photographs at events throughout the year and editing their photographs before adding them to their assigned

spreads. Students have also learned how to use the Striv equipment to broadcast home varsity sporting events. Finally, students spend time using Adobe Premiere Pro to create and edit highlight videos from games, create promotional videos for special events, and to recognize students who have earned honors within our school.

SOCIAL STUDIES/ALGEBRA **Lisa Schmidt**

One of the goals of our class is to look at how the concepts we are learning about can be used as students become adults. This year in Algebra I, ninth graders were able to take a look at what it would take to purchase their dream vehicle. Students were able to choose the vehicle of their dreams, become familiar with terms associated with buying a vehicle, and research the vehicle including leasing, buying new and buying pre-owned. One of the first obstacles was the research of a new vehicle, just being able to navigate the website and make decisions about necessary options and add-ons was challenging. The second obstacle was attempting to find a comparable pre-owned vehicle since there is a lower-than-normal amount of pre-owned vehicles on the market. Students worked with several variables such as interest rate, length of the contract, size of down payment and pre-owned versus certified pre-owned. They were able to evaluate the costs and benefits of options associated with purchasing a new, pre-owned vehicle or leasing. This project also gave students the opportunity to discuss ideas such as the impact of credit score when making a major purchase that is financed; the difference in warranties for new, pre-owned or leased vehicles; and the change in what a consumer would pay in total for a loan when an interest rate is higher than what was expected, a down payment changes or the length of the term is shortened. After researching and determining different prices based on multiple variable changes, students completed a reflective essay that included a conclusion about which vehicle-purchasing option would be best for them personally.

Eighth grade Algebra students have learned concepts such as: solving for a variable in multiple steps, linear equations, functions, function equations, problem solving, expressions and equations. Students have been reviewing and strengthening previously learned skills by completing a daily math minute or fraction sheet. Algebra students are showing not only their aptitude for solving problems but writing problems and being able to decode what is asked of them. Students just finished a project where they investigated the slope of a hill and what steepness can do to change speed of a sled traveling down that hill.

Students in ninth grade Geography have become more familiar with the five themes of geography as they work their way around the world. We are just finishing up the study of Latin America. Students are looking at culture, economy, government, current events and demographics. Students presented this information to the class in a way that invited involvement of all class members through a celebration that is unique to the particular country they researched.

Eighth grade United States History began the year by taking a look at the history of each of the students. Each member of the class researched their family history and presented it using primary sources, they interviewed a family member and wrote a personal interest story, and created a paper quilt square that represented their family. This project got us to look at the stories that make up our own histories and have a greater appreciation for

the histories of others that we read about in our textbooks. We have gone on to study the Declaration of Independence, the Revolution and the writing of the Constitution.

World History, studied by seventh graders, has seen students learning about the Renaissance through the American and French Revolutions. Students have looked at how the ideas that began during the Renaissance time period evolved into the ideas in the Enlightenment that then led to the Revolutions that took place throughout the world. We will continue after the break with looking at Revolutions in other parts of the world that were influenced by the Enlightenment thinkers and the American Revolution.

BUSINESS **Jacob Shaffer**

Accounting I

Throughout the course, students have been learning the “language of business”: accounting. Students have gained experience in accounting by journalizing and posting transactions to special journals, preparing financial statements, and completing the other steps of the accounting cycle. By focusing on a service business organized as a proprietorship and a merchandising business organized as a corporation, students have gained insight into a broad range of accounting concepts.

Accounting II

Accounting II builds upon what students learned in Accounting I (Accounting I is a prerequisite). The concepts in this course provide more depth to what was learned the previous school year and delve into various types of accounting, such as departmentalized, corporation, and management accounting. This course furthermore prepares students for accounting and business courses in college.

Critical Issues

As seniors, students take this course to develop career-readiness skills and create a senior project. At the beginning of the semester, students learned the importance of community service and helping others. Students then transitioned into researching colleges and careers and constructing job application materials. After creating and revising the job application materials, students had the privilege of participating in a mock job interview with a member of the community. In the second half of the semester, students learn concepts related to taxation and meeting management and create and present their senior projects.

Digital Design

Students in Digital Design have the opportunity to learn how to use several Adobe programs. This year, students have been able to learn the ins and outs of Photoshop and Illustrator. With Photoshop, students have incorporated exciting effects into editing photos. With Illustrator, students are learning how to create their own designs with shapes and lines. Next semester, students will learn more about Adobe programs, such as Premiere Pro and After Effects.

Entrepreneurship

At the beginning of the semester, students first learned the risks involved with being an entrepreneur and the strengths of well-known, successful entrepreneurs. From those moments, students have been developing a business plan of their own aspirations. While gaining knowledge about various forms of business ownerships, economics, and marketing, students have created parts of their business plan, which will be finished at the end of the course.

Introduction to Business

Students have been learning various aspects of a business and its operations. From understanding how to manage and market a business to understanding macro- and micro-economic impacts, students are gaining insights into successfully participating in the business world. Students are also learning the value of ethics and the importance of building positive employee-employer relationships.

Personal Finance

This course covers a wide range of financial topics. At the beginning of the course, students first learned the importance of setting short-term, medium-term, and long-term financial and life goals. Gaining an understanding of values and goals allows each student to begin outlining a budget for their current or future situations. Students have also gained knowledge about savings, investments, and being a smart consumer. At the end of the course, students learn various economics standards, such as different types of economic systems and the concepts associated with supply and demand.

Senior English

In order to improve writing, reading, and speaking skills, this class heavily focuses on proper grammar for two-thirds of the school year and expands to focus on written communication for the last third of the school year. The grammar portion of the curriculum includes learning how to use the various parts of speech, commas, and punctuation in several situations. In the spring the students will take their grammar knowledge and apply it while writing.

HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES **Lance Steffen**

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

American Government is a one-semester course for seniors. An emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of national and state governments.

This first quarter is focused on the Constitutional Foundations of our government as well as the structure of our National Government. To do this, we have looked at theory of government as well as the role each of our three branches of government plays.

The second quarter focuses on individual liberties given in the Bill of Rights as well as our political party system and what each party officially believes. The goal is to relate this information to students in a way that will be applicable to them as a voter in our society.

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

This year in American Experience, we have divided the class into two separate sections, to better reflect student knowledge of American History and English/Music. Among the many topics we have discussed in the history segment of American Experience, the juniors have studied the European exploration and colonization of America. We also learned how we gained our independence and how slavery shaped our young nation before pushing our country into the Civil War by the end of the semester.

Second semester plans include a study of the Industrial Revolution in the US, the changing role of the US on the world's stage with America's role in WWI & WWII. We will also discuss the impact of the Great Depression, Civil Rights Era, and the cultural effects of the Cold War in America as well as more contemporary topics like the War on Terror and more recent American History.

WORLD HISTORY

Sophomores in World History are learning that while historical events are unique, they are often driven by similar repeated forces. The course identifies several cultures and civilizations throughout history as well as major achievements of those cultures along the way. As we discuss the history of the world, our major goal is to incorporate the stories of as many cultures around the world as we can. This is a class devoted to the story of all of us and how we reached the modern age.

The first semester of World History focused on the Beginnings of Civilization, The Establishment of River Civilizations, The First Age of Empires, & Rome. So far in the timeline of the world, we have reached roughly 500 CE. For the second semester, our goal is to discuss the major events associated with Islam and Eastern Conquerors, the Middle (which we take a lot of pride in), we finished the season 5-4. This year we were District Runners Up and qualified for the playoffs for the 4th consecutive season, our 21st overall as a school district. Though our playoff matcAges in Europe contrasted with West African peoples, The Age of Exploration and the people involved, and finishing with the Enlightenment Period in Europe with a focus on social and ideological change associated with this time period.

PHYSICAL AND EARTH SCIENCE Laura Stock

The Physical and Earth Science classes at Elmwood-Murdock Junior/Senior High have been keeping the laboratory and classrooms busy this year.

The 8th grade Earth Science classes completed units on experimental design, matter and measurement, the solar system, the earth-moon system and finally, Earth's atmosphere. During October and November, the students learned about the solar system. We created a scale model of the solar system down the hallway with a sun as tall as the well. This made Pluto the size of a pea! We designed experiments to model the greenhouse effect on Venus and Earth. We used our PASCO temperature sensors to model why Earth experiences four distinct seasons and used Earth and moon "lollipops" and online simulations to discover why we observe moon phases on Earth. In December, we learned about air pressure by conducting experiments like crushing cans and vacuuming sealing our peers in trash bags. We will utilize this knowledge to springboard into our next unit: weather. We will also study the Earth's structure, minerals and rocks, fossils, plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes by the end of the year.

The 9th grade class, Intro to Physics/Earth Science, began the year with a review of scientific methods and experimentation. We learned about waves by using slinkies and online simulations. We used our knowledge of wave energy and light to explore the universe. We learned about a star's life cycle, and what it would be like if we fell in a black hole (Terrifying. 0/10. Would not recommend). Then we classified galaxies and learn how the universe began. Then we transitioned into motion and forces. We used our PASCO motion and force sensors probe ware to model mathematical and graphical relationships of Newton's Laws of Motion and used Archimedes Principle to model forces using arrows as vectors. Students will begin next semester designing balloon-powered mini cars that can travel at least six meters. We'll then crash our cars into the wall, measuring the accelerations and force of impact with our cell phones. We will

design bumpers for our cars to explore momentum and will then design a container to save an egg from a 12 foot drop.

Chemistry is sometimes difficult because we often learn about things that we can't physically observe, like protons or electrons. The Chemistry classes began the year studying matter and its observable physical properties, such as density. Students used this knowledge to experimentally determine the percentage of sugar in Pepsi and Mountain Dew. It is always fun to see the look on students' faces at the end of the lab when we actually measure out 77 grams of sugar, which is the amount of sugar in a 20 oz. bottle of Mountain Dew. Students also explored other physical properties of matter and utilized these properties to separate mixtures. The highlight of the semester was the student-led experiment to determine a way to remove elemental iron from Total® brand cereal. Every year I am blown away by the creativity of our students in solving problems and this year's juniors were no exception. We then ventured into the sub-atomic world of protons, neutrons and electrons and completed the semester by designing and constructing element ornaments to decorated our classroom Chemis"tree."

In Physics, we kicked off the year studying vectors and solving a variety of problems

involving vector addition of forces. We then studied motion, particularly velocity and acceleration. Students designed and conducted experiments to explore how reaction time might be affected by cold, video game play or by receiving rewards. They gathered data and used kinematics equations to calculate reaction time. We learned about projectile motion and used our knowledge to work on three different versions of "hit the ball in the cup." We finished the semester studying Newton's Laws of Motion and solving a variety of problems using PASCO force sensors, force tables, simulations and smartphones apps.

ONE-ACT PLAY PRODUCTION Keri Hogue Marcus Manley

This was another exciting year for the Elmwood-Murdock drama program! We prepared and performed "Into the Crimson Shallows" which was based on the book Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson. Our script was written this year by Mark Hogue Jr., Keri Hogue, Marcus Manley, and Molly Feile. Along with our team mascot, Mr. Bones, we had forty 7th through 12th graders involved in many different capacities with a variety of talents, and to say this was our strongest year of teamwork, unity, and striving to be our best, is an understatement. There were a variety of highlights to our season. At Norfolk, we competed against all Class levels, including Class A, and received 4th place! Students recognized for their acting were Sophie Frank, Rylan Meyer, Riley Rose, Tessa Robertson, Kaitlynn Ashlock, Jack Deibert, Haylee Josoff, Hanna Josoff, Lily Pope, and Averi Hogue.

Our second competition was at York High School where we placed third in our division. Rylan Meyer and Averi Hogue were awarded the Best Supporting Actor and Actress in our entire division. Other students recognized for their acting were: Riley Rose, Jack Deibert, Sophie Frank, Rylan Meyer, Sela Rikli, Angela Brockhoff, Wyatt Baker, Haylee Josoff, Hanna Josoff, Lily Pope, and Averi Hogue. At ECNC, we placed second in the conference. Students recognized for their acting were: Sophie Frank, Rylan Meyer, and Averi Hogue. Riley Rose was recognized as

the Best Actor in the entire Conference! Overall, we collected 16 Superior Scores for our season.

Finally, at our C2 District Competition, our team competed with previous state champions and still received the Champion Plaque to place first in our district! We were back to State again! We also received the Best Tech Award in the District! Our Tech Crew Members: Tucker Oehlerking, Harrison Koehn, Nolan Stroy, Macy Howard, Ellie Meyer, Brody Marsh, Ryerson Kastens, Brooklyn Dowding, Annie Backemeyer, Rylie Gordon, Marissa Oehlerking, Leo Rikli, Nolan Platt, and Eva Stansell. These honors were a major highlight of our season, and the students continued to grow as performers and a community. We went back to the Norfolk stage and placed third in the state again this year. Students recognized at the state level for their acting were: Sophie Frank, Riley Rose, Haylee Josoff, Angela Brockhoff, Hanna Josoff, and Averi Hogue. It was an amazing accomplishment for these students and the entire team to begin and end their season on the Norfolk stage. Our fourth annual "Dinner and Dress Rehearsal" catered by Round the Bend Steakhouse was another success! Kim Arent, Michelle Meyer, Amy Rikli, Anne Pope, Carae Oehlerking and their teams took the lead on this event, and it had another overwhelming response! Thank you to the entire community for your support! Wow!

We are so fortunate! We sold just under 300 meals which will go towards future expenditures to build our program. One major purchase will be a new travelinglight-board. This year, combined with careful stewardship, our expenses were just around \$3,000 to have a quality, competitive production. Since we are a self-funded program, your donations and monetary support are so important and valued. Over half of our costumes and pieces were sewn by Tami Pleiss. Gina Frank helped with various costume pieces, props, snack shopper, and anything else that was needed to help make the students successful. They volunteer their talents, time, and their dedication is evident to help our students shine on the stage.

Our additional Public Performance was another success for our program, and we can't thank you enough for an amazing showing that evening! There were about 300 people of all ages in attendance! Wow! The students were so encouraged to feel the support from the audience and the Free Will donation helped to provide a team dinner for a team of 45 in Norfolk! Your attendance and generosity were greatly appreciated! The overall audience support we had this year at all of the competitions including Districts AND State is the highest we have ever had. It doesn't go unnoticed, and our students are forever grateful. Please keep coming to our performances! We love it! THANK YOU, again, for your continued support to help these students shine on stage and grow as performers and leaders. Our sincerest thanks goes to the dedicated students, parents, teachers, community, administration, and school board. Additional thanks to the Murdock and Elmwood volunteer fire departments for the amazing send-off to our state competition the last two years! This year will truly be one to remember for quite some time. For now, the "Show must go on! As we prepare ofr One-Act 2022!

SPANISH CLUB **Manuel Camina**

The same as other years, Elmwood-Murdock has a Spanish Club. Several kids save some of their free time to join us and share the culture of Spanish speaking countries, enjoying movies with lots of nachos and salsa, and we have lots of ideas for this school year. So far we have visited a haunted house in Omaha during Halloween, we had game nights, decorated for Navidad, and in the future we will do activities related to fútbol, learn how to dance salsa, go ice skating, cook, and so many more fun things.

Check your calendars to see when we are having a meeting and feel free to join us. If you want to be part of the Spanish Club talk to our "oficiales" or any other member of El Club de Español, including Mr. Camina. Re-member... this year is free!

FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA (FBLA)

Laura Rikli
Jacob Shaffer

The past FBLA season operated on a virtual format for conferences and competitions. Elmwood-Murdock FBLA was able to achieve success at the State Leadership Conference in April and qualify students for the online National Leadership Conference in June. The following students competed in the national competition: Noah Arent, Lexi Bacon, Claire Ernst, Bailey Frahm, Hunter Hansen, Rylee Hogue, Nate Lockman, Levi Offner, Gus Pope, Kylee Rieflin, and Sela Rikli. At the National Leadership Conference, the American Enterprise Team (Rylee Hogue, Nate Lockman, Kylee Rieflin) placed 9th, and the Partnership with Business Team (Lexi Bacon, Bailey Frahm, Sela Rikli) placed 8th.

At the end of September, our local officers participated in the state's Fall Leadership Conference, which was the first conference held in person for a year and a half. At this conference, our members were inspired and learned how to lead in our organization and school. At this conference, some of our chapter officers helped lead a break out session about membership involvement at the local level.

In the middle of September, our Partnership with Business Committee planned a community event alongside the Elmwood-Murdock Merchants' Association (EMMA). The first annual Good Neighbor Festival was organized to bring together members of the community who haven't gotten to know many people or businesses within the community the last year and a half because of COVID restrictions. Almost a dozen businesses set up booths at this event, and EMMA and FBLA provided free food and games for community members. Local businesses also donated raffle prizes for those in attendance. It was a success, and we hope the event continues to grow in the years to come!

SCIENCE CLUB **Laura Stock**

Science Club is off to another great start, adding several new members this year. We kicked off the year with by extracting DNA from bananas and kiwi fruit. In early October, we helped the Lower Platte South NRD host a "Test your Well" event at the high school. Our students were able to get hands-on experience testing over fifty local water samples for nitrates. In the same month, we held a science themed jack o' lantern carving contest in October for Halloween. We spent

November's meeting solving a fictitious murder of a town mayor using forensics techniques, such as hair analysis, blood typing, and fingerprinting. Next semester, we will begin by preparing for the annual Science Olympiad competition that will be held in April.

ART/ART CLUB **Linda Trundle**

I hope all of you were able to see the second grade through high school entries for the windmill art contest sponsored by the Kregel Windmill Museum. All of the entries got a ribbon recognizing their research of windmills in the area and several students from each grade got blue ribbons and best of show ribbons.

Thanks to the Elmwood Bank, the Community Center, the Library, the Burrows Realty, and the Murdock Bank for displaying the art work of the students again this year.

Thanks to the generous donations of art supplies by the community members, every grade, kindergarten through high school, was able to do watercolor paintings this semester and use brand new brushes to do so!! Elementary students also did scratch art, pastel pictures, and folded magazines to make Christmas trees. 5th and 6th graders finger knitted coat hangers using your donated yarn.

The third graders made Christmas decorations to decorate a room at the Aldrich House for the holidays. Presently the 4th graders are revising and illustrating one of Bess Streeter Aldrich's short stories into a children's book that will be published. Let them know if you want to help by purchasing a copy!! The Aldrich Foundation gave every student in 3rd and 4th grade a free ticket to visit the Aldrich House during the holidays in recognition of their work on these two projects.

High school and 8th graders enjoyed the beautiful fall by drawing outdoors. They drew landscapes, trees, the local buildings and shadows. Other projects included calligraphy, acrylic painting, pen and ink, chalk, one point perspective, watercolor, scratch art, and weaving.

High School artists just finished a pottery unit, making coil pots, pinch pots, slab pots, tiles, beads, cups, plates, vases, a pencil caddy and snails. They also explored "throwing" pots on the potter's wheel. Currently they are doing a unit on portraits in which they are learning about Renaissance artists Raphael, Michaelangelo, and Da Vinci. They are doing a silhouette, a self portrait, and a pencil drawing of their grandparent. They will enter a local contest with their portrait of their grandparent and a written story of a memory descriptive of their grandparent.

Art club made gingerbread houses, tie dyed t shirts, and painted pumpkins.

We are looking forward to the conference Art show in Lincoln this spring.

We are very grateful for your generous support of the art program

ELEMENTARY STUDENT COUNCIL **Alex Welna** **Cindy Backemeyer**

This year we have 18 students on the student council and two sponsors. The sixth-grade student council members are Ayzlee Haertel, Caitlyn Hosier, Ella Stroy, Brandt Jacobson,

Dustin Gordon, and Jonah Rikli. The fifth grade members are Layton Bornemeier, Kate Stock, Kourtney, Dowding, Megan Moline, Cameryn Towle, and Jimmy Piitz. The fourth grade members are Bo Backemeyer, Asha Murdock, Lane Meister, Conner Clements, Ella Vogt and Madden Vogt. We have about two meetings per month. All the students have shown a strong sense of community, responsibility, and work ethic. They are always willing to help the school in any way that they can.

This year, the STUCO members were asked to help at Family Reading Night. Each grade level presented a reading lesson and presentation for about 100 people who attended. The night was a great success and the students are really improving their speaking and presentation skills.

October through December the STUCO members, with Mrs. Nicholson's aid, have created videos that broadcast the news for the week. The Student Council Kids have learned how to write a script and use an app called "Do Ink," which uses green screen technology. Members have been working on these videos during their study halls, recess, and free time. They have shown a great deal of creativity with this project, and their speaking and technology skills have improved each week.

Toward the end of November, the student council began a fundraiser to raise money for a Gaga Pit and recess equipment by selling Baker's Chocolates. With the fundraiser and School Stores, over \$3,500 has been raised. Thanks to all the families who helped sell chocolate. We hope to have the Gaga Pit by the Spring. We also plan on having gourmet coffee and treats brought to the E-M staff in January.

In December, we collected money and canned goods for the food drive. Our school goal was 3,000 items, but we exceeded our goal and collected around 4,500 items. We cannot express the gratitude we have toward the generosity of others during this time of giving. These items are a tremendous help to our local food pantry.

Running the school store and concessions for school ball games keeps the sponsors and stucco members busy, but it allows us to practice our money counting skills, and learn important customer service techniques. Along with all of these fun activities, members have shown their creativity and organization in different aspects. Stucco members have designed posters to hang around the school to advertise and promote the theme days for the school.

JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT COUNCIL **Heather Bornemeier**

Shortly after school started in August, 7th and 8th graders applied to have a role in the Junior High Student Council. This 12-member group meets once per month to work on projects, plan future events, and work to build a dynamic group that promotes positivity and leadership around the school. Thus far, the Junior High Student Council members have created gifts of thanks, Christmas decorations, and have completed various acts of kindness and leadership. During the second semester, the Junior High Student Council plans to do more work for the community as well as the elementary school. This group takes great pride in constantly wanting to help others!

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL Nichole Justesen

Homecoming Activities

In October, we organized Spirit Week and Homecoming with the EM Cheerleaders. The Student Council and the Cheerleaders organized and led the following games throughout Homecoming week to get students involved in spirit week and to raise money for early detection and awareness of colon cancer. We raised over \$100 in games. Below is a list of activities that were planned by Student Council:

Monday – Knock out
Tuesday – Blind Volleyball
Wednesday – Balloon Relay
Thursday – Dodge Ball
Friday – All School Pep Rally

Homecoming Court 2021:

Rylan Meyer / Sela Rikli
Jack Deibert / Lexi Bacon
Cody Kopf / Bailey Frahm
Crown Bearers –
Atley Bacon– Daughter of Keegan & April Bacon
Caleb and Chase - Sons of Aaron & Katie Pryor
King – Jack Deibert
Queen – Sela Rikli

VETERANS DAY

Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools would like to honor all local veterans by inviting them to attend our annual, “Veterans Day” programs. The program was held at the Elmwood-Murdock High School, on Thursday, November 11, 2021. The JR/SR High School program began at 10:00 a.m. and was located in the new gym at the Murdock site and Strived for the elementary students and community members who could not attend. Lunch for veterans and their spouses were served lunch after the program.

Local veterans, their spouses, and the public were invited to attend the program. The guest speaker was Lt Colonel Kevin Hynes of the Nebraska Air National Guard and US Department of Veterans Affairs. Special performances by various student groups, such as choir and concert bands were performed. Don Klaumann and the Gretna American Legion Riders had a special presentation on folding of the flag.

FOOD DRIVE

The High School Student Council launched the food drive on November 17th. The food drive was a combined effort with the Elementary, Jr. High, and High School Student Council and the patrons of Elmwood and Murdock. The Canned Food Drive ended on Dec 17th. Our goal was to collect 3000 cans at each building. The winner of this year’s food drive received an ice cream party and first in line for lunch for semester 2. The eighth grade class collected the most cans/dollars for first lunch and sophomores collected the most for 2nd lunch! Both buildings reached their food drive goal so students were released at 1:00 for Christmas Break. The students did an amazing job, they collected approximated \$2100 dollars and 1305 cans between the two buildings to support our local food pantry.

QUIZ BOWL Lisa Hynes

Junior High students have been able to compete in the Cass County Quad competitions once again at Conestoga High School. Members of the 7th grade team are Dylan Bornemeier, Ellie Meyer, Eva Stansell, Grayson Schroll, and Carson Towle. Members of the 8th grade team are William Fox, Aiden Meisinger, Hannah Petersen, Meighan Smith, and Aryana Wall.

On December 16, Elmwood Murdock will be

taking two teams to the Nebraska LifeSmarts Championship on the East Campus of UNL. LifeSmarts is the nation’s premier consumer program. Now in its 28th year, Lifesmarts consistently challenges students on core consumer topics and helps them develop critical thinking skills. Participants focus on five key topic areas: consumer rights and responsibilities, the environment, health & safety, personal finance, and technology & workforce preparation. The goal of LifeSmarts is to create consumer savvy young people who will be well equipped for adult life in today’s complex, global marketplace.

LifeSmarts will be a new experience for the quiz bowl team as this is the first Nebraska State Championship event and the first time our quiz bowl team has taken part in it. We are looking forward to the experience and learning more about competing in this contest. Members of the JV team include Dylan Bornemeier, Meighan Smith, Hannah Petersen, Aryana Wall, and Carson Towle. Varsity team include Madison Ashlock, Averi Hogue, Grace Jacobson, Drake Clements, and Abrahm Jones.

We have once again registered a team of high schoolers to once again compete on the on-air competition hosted by B107.3 from Nebraska City. Depending on the number of teams registered, we may be able to add a second team of players from Elmwood-Murdock. EM team #1 members include Nathan Miller, Garret Pleiss, Drake Clements, and Grace Jacobson. EM Team #2 members include Averi Hogue, Madison Ashlock, Trevin McKenzie, and Brock Mintkin.

GOLF Curt Backemeyer

The Knights Boys’ Golf Team in the spring of 2021 included: seniors Devin Mather and Gus Pope; junior Nate Lockman; sophomores Jeston Junker, Nate Rust (out with injury), and Colt Bevans; freshmen Sam Clements and Easton Miller. The team had several newcomers and made steady progress throughout the season highlighted by a District Runner-Up finish at Humphrey Steepleview Golf Course. This qualified the Knights for the Class D State Meet at North Platte Lake Maloney Golf Club where E-M finished 9th in the two day event. The State qualifying team members were Devin Mather, Gus Pope, Nate Lockman, Jeston Junker, and Easton Miller. Easton Miller was also an individual State qualifier with a 3rd place District finish. We look forward to returning three of the five State qualifiers along with Nate Rust returning to full health.

The fall of 2021 marked the 12th girls’ golf season for Elmwood-Murdock. The Knights had seven team members including: senior Claire Ernst; juniors Elly West and Ella Zierott; sophomores Madi Lambert and Jacie Fleischman; freshmen Isabelle Halferty and Rose Offner. The team of Madi, Jacie, Claire, Ella, and Elly was able to finish as ECNC conference runner-up. Madi, Claire, Ella, and Jacie set a new 9-hole school record score of 206 at Grandpa’s Woods at two different meets. We were pleased to have good numbers to field a full team and create competition for team spots to help everyone improve. Congratulations to all of the girls on a fine season.

CROSS COUNTRY Carley Burbach

The Elmwood-Murdock-Weeping Water Trailblazer Cross Country team participated in 10 meets during the 2021 season, and had one state qualifier. Both High School girls and boys compete on courses of 5k (3.1

miles), while Junior High courses vary between 2K and 3K (1.25 and 1.8 miles). The Girls Cross Country team scored their highest team placing of third at the Auburn Invitational. The Boys Cross Country team scored their highest team placing of third at the ECNC Conference Meet. Individual medals were earned by Valeriia Khromova, Brianna Ross, and Trevin McKenzie this season. In total, there were 13 high school and 10 junior high athletes. Runners from Elmwood-Murdock for the high school team this season included: Sara Kicak, Brianna Ross, Tucker Oehlerking, Trevin McKenzie, Valeriia Khromova, and Lena Gardavior. Runners competing on the junior high team from Elmwood-Murdock were: Will Fox, Blake Lavington, and Christian Brettman

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL Lance Steffen

This season was a learning experience across the board. We set lofty goals for this season and while we didn’t achieve all of our goals for this season, the team gained valuable life experiences that will benefit them later in life.

Season recap-

The 2021 Football team had 24 players and relied heavily on underclassmen to fill important roles due to having only two seniors in the program. We truly began our season in January with our Knight Power strength and conditioning program. We ask a lot of our male athletes – 40 days in the spring and 40 days in the summer. We had 20 football players show up and achieve the E-M Power Award for dedication to Knights Power! The purpose of Knights Power is to build our bodies for success on the field of competition as well as to build positive work ethic habits and a commitment to the team when many of their peers are enjoying time off from school-related responsibilities. It is our philosophy that the workout only works, if you work. I give immense credit to our athletes for the work they put in when no one else is watching.

Our goals for 2021 were focused on improving our culture and camaraderie as a team and competing for District and State Championships. We built on our experience from last year’s team and had several new faces contribute in a big way this season. Though we came up short on some of those goals, we had a good mix of experienced and younger players have huge roles on our team. Due to some tough breaks and our very difficult schedule hup with Howells-Dodge didn’t go our way, I believe it helps to continue to set the foundation for future teams and I believe our success this season has helped to perpetuate the fact that E-M Knights Football is a force to be reckoned with.

Everyone contributed to our success and improvement throughout the season both at the varsity and the junior varsity level. As mentioned before, our varsity finished with an 5-4 record and our JV team finished with a 1-2 record, though was very competitive in those games, many times playing as freshmen and sophomores against sophomores and juniors. A staple of our program is our commitment to the importance of practice and I believe we definitely exemplified that this season. I was very proud of the very few absences we had from school and practice which allowed us to excel in the classroom as well as on the field.

Though I am having a hard time imagining myself as the coach of the E-M football team without my first group of freshman, our two seniors, Cody Kopf and Jax Spellman, I know they have helped to continue the culture we strive for at Elmwood-Murdock year-

in and year-out. Truly, these young men grew and thrived in their roles as leaders of this team. I am very thankful for the opportunity to have been their coach and I can't wait to see what great things they do with their futures.

For those players that are returning next year and any who are considering going out that didn't play last year, we are building something special here and I encourage you to become a part of our Football Family. I am very excited for next season and can't wait to start! **KNIGHT PRIDE!!**

HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL Nichole Justesen

Season recap –

The 2021 Elmwood-Murdock volleyball team consisted of 16 girls! We finished the 2021 varsity season with 23-11 record with a 4th place finish at state. The JV ended their season 1-15. This year we had 5 seniors: Lexi Bacon, Bailey Frahm, Sela Rikli, Audrey Romero, and Brenna Schmidt. The girls worked hard over the summer by attending camps, open gym, and summer league. The girls started lifting and volleyball workouts in May and continued through August. The main focus was team unity, increased strength, quickness, and showing up! Our team motto was Commit, Focus, Finish. Assistant coaches were Lisa Schmidt and Emma Leone.

Every year the Elmwood-Murdock volleyball team helps support awareness for families in need. This year our team and the EMHS student council decided to support Colon cancer. A special thank you to Jolean Piitz for printing our awareness drive shirts this year. We were able to raise over \$500.00 to support colon cancer!

Our team goals for 2021 focused on high efficiency serving and serve receive, as well as, creating a positive team-oriented court. We worked toward achieving our goal during the off-season by bringing in Gwen Egbert, Assistant Coach for Arizona State University, to develop our passing/serving skills in grades 7th through 12th. We also attended the Malcolm camp – 3rd place finish, Palmyra camp – 1st place finish, and Colorado State University (CSU) camp and finished top four in the class A division. When we were not playing volleyball, the team had an opportunity to spend a few days in Colorado having fun hiking, shopping, and white water rafting.

We were small in numbers, but everyone on the team impacted our success at both the junior varsity and varsity level. Our team goals include 90% serving and 80% passing accuracy and a team 3.8 GPA. We ended the year at 91.3% serving and 93% serve receive efficiency. The Knights collected 1119 kills,

1007 assists, 2148 digs, 74 solo blocks and 200 ace serves. Our varsity GPA is 3.84!

I was very proud of all of the girls' effort and commitment during the season. Our last two games showed how much the girls loved the game of volleyball. The upperclassman were instrumental in our successful year, their goal was to leave a legacy. We broke several records this year: individual blocks, career blocks, season digs, individual digs, and placed 4th at state. I believe they have accomplished their goal!

JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL Jen Justus

This season there were 21 girls on the team. We were able to play most games in an A, B, and C team format, to allow more opportunities to improve and grow as a player. It was great to see the growth of the girls as we moved from August through October. The girls worked hard every day to get better as a teammate, player, and person. Our overall goal was to get better every day during season, and to prepare for high school volleyball, both mentally and physically. We had a great season, and look forward to next year! Thank you to the parents for all the help and support, and good luck to those continuing into high school sports next year.

UNIFIED BOWLING April Bacon

This is our district's fourth year participating in unified bowling. We were excited to have a "normal" season after a shorten season last year due to Covid-19. The purpose of unified bowling is to promote social inclusion through a shared sport. Unified bowling joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Having a sport in common is just one more way that preconceptions and false ideas are swept away.

The district had five students this year participating in bowling. The season is packed into the month of November. The bowling team practiced once a week after school at Papio Bowl in Papillion, NE. The season consisted of five regular season matches and then districts. The team bowled six games each match using a bakers format. The team traveled to Lincoln, Omaha, Tecumseh, Elkhorn and Fremont for the matches. Post season play consisted of a district match in Lincoln. The team received third place in the Malcolm tournament and third place at districts. The athletes and partners both improved their skills during the season but more importantly had fun doing a sport that they can continue playing into adulthood.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL Aaron Pryor

The 2021-2022 Season has begun and the E-M Boys Basketball Teams will be competing at the Varsity, JV, and C Team Levels. We currently have 19 student-athletes in the program in Grades 9-11. The team has made the bump back up to Class C-2 this season. We have a challenging regular season schedule and are aiming to be playing at a high level when Districts arrive in late February. We look forward to the opportunity to compete while representing Elmwood-Murdock High School in a positive manner at all times. We thank you for your support!

JUNIOR HIGH BOYS BASKETBALL Monte Frerichs

This season there were 19 boys on the team. We were able to play an A, B, and many times a C team game against our opponents to allow for more opportunities to improve and grow. It was great to see the growth of the teams as we moved through the season. The overall goal is to develop the players and practice skills that will carry them into high school. I think teamwork is one of the most important attributes of any program and throughout the season this became a main focus. The players really worked together well as the season progressed.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL Paul Dwyer

This year we have 20 girls in Grades 9-12 out for high school basketball. They are led by Seniors Lexi Bacon, Sela Rikli, Bailey Frahm, Claire Ernst, and Brenna Schmidt. The team is early into the season and are working each day to improve upon their skills for a very demanding schedule that is played each year. The Lady Knights are playing D1 basketball classification, and this year have 20 games against teams that are either C2 or C1 in classification.

The 200 hour club has now entered it's third season. In order to be a member of this club, the girls had to have played in at least 200 hours of off-season basketball on their own. The girls were also awarded hours for being multi sport athletes. The following girls made the club and their pictures are hanging on the wall in the new gym Sela Rikli, Lexi Bacon, Bailey Frahm, Ella Zierott, Laney Frahm, Cassidy Callaway, Claire Ernst, Madie Justesen, Jacie Fleischman, Jordan Vogler, Tatum Backemeyer, Isabelle Halferty, Dakota Glasshoff, Ava Hohman, Annie Backemeyer, Brooklyn Mans, Brooklyn Dowding, Zoe Zierott, and Brooke Goudie.