

Valley Heights

News & Notes



March 2019

Public Meeting Set

All Valley Heights constituents are invited to a public meeting set for March 20, 2019, starting at 6:00 pm in the Valley Heights JR/SR High commons.

The Valley Heights Board of Education established the purpose of this meeting as a way to gain input relative to what people want and expect of the Valley Heights school system. The Board is set to establish a Strategic Plan that will extend through the next three to five years and is excited to gain ideas from parents, students, staff, and business leaders.

A few years ago, the State Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education conducted town hall meetings around the state asking people what they want and expect from their public schools. From those meetings, the Kansans Can Vision for Education emerged and this vision is how all public schools in the state guide their efforts. The vision states that Kansas will lead the world in the success of each student. The vision also goes on to state that a successful high school graduate has the "Academic Preparation, Cognitive Preparation, Technical Skills, Employability Skills, and Civic Engagement to be successful in Postsecondary Education, in the Attainment of an Industry Recognized Certification, or in the Workforce, without the need for remediation".

How we are charged to measure results and success of this vision is guided by five tenets that include: Social-Emotional Factors Measured Locally, Kindergarten Readiness, Individual Plans of Study, High School Graduation, and Postsecondary Success. All districts will be measured using a variety of Foundational Structures, and the one being addressed through this meeting is Stakeholder Engagement. The Board is seeking vital information from Valley Heights constituents to guide their planning process. This meeting will go a long way in supporting everyone's VISION for Valley Heights Schools.

Bring an open mind, and be ready to share your ideas with your friends and neighbors.

Board Office

121 E. Commercial
PO Box 89
Waterville, KS 66548
(785) 363-2398

www.valleyheights.org

~ John Bergkamp
Superintendent of Schools

Valley Heights Junior/Senior High School

Student Success Meetings

Valley Heights rolled out a new concept for doing parent-teacher conferences. The new concept is called Student Success Meetings. Student Success Meetings allow parents to play a more active role in understanding the goals and future plans of their child(ren). Items discussed during Student Success Meetings include academic goals, behavior goals, and post-high school plans. The fall Student Success Meetings also provide input from parents on the classes that students should be taking during their four year plan.

So far, the Student Success Meetings have been very beneficial for increasing parental engagement. During the fall Student Success Meetings, 93% of the students families had shown up. The spring Student Success Meetings had 74% attendance. This is triple the percentage of families that attended the traditional parent teacher conferences. There are some adjustments that need to be made to next year's Student Success Meetings, but Valley Heights is enjoying the communication opportunities with our families!

State Report Card

The Kansas State Department of Education has released its Kansas Report Card for the 2017-2018 state assessment results. Valley Heights JR/SR High School fared very well according to the report card, which bases their label off how many students demonstrate proficiency. The following data below shares our percentage and label for Math, English-Language Arts, and combined (Math & ELA):

- ◆ **English-Language Arts:** 40% proficient = Exceeding State Average
- ◆ **Math:** 31% proficient = Meeting State Average
- ◆ **Combined:** 36% proficient = Exceeding State Average

The state report card can be found at: <https://ksreportcard.ksde.org/>

~ Chad Kenworthy
JR/SR High School Principal

Valley Heights Elementary

Valley Heights Elementary has become an academic leader within the state of Kansas. According to the latest Building Report Card the Kansas State Department of Education released, Valley Heights Elementary is exceeding the state average in all tested areas. Valley Heights Elementary students score in the top 15% of the state, has recently received the National Title I, and National Blue Ribbon Awards.

The aforementioned information indicates that a good education foundation has been established for our children. To be successful in life, however, one must use this foundation to build real world skills. Some recent Kansas state data shows some concern with our post-secondary student success rate. Out of 100 high school freshman students:

- ◆ 86 will graduate
- ◆ 69 will enroll in a two- or four-year post-secondary institute
- ◆ 45 will complete one year
- ◆ 31 will complete a post-secondary credential with labor market value

We need and can do better than this!

Skills that employers want to see are:

- ◆ Professionalism and work ethic
- ◆ Teamwork and collaboration
- ◆ Verbal communication
- ◆ Ethics and social responsibility

Two areas that Valley Heights schools will be concentrating on in the near future are personalized learning and Project Based Learning. These two areas of concentration will help our students develop the skills employers desire and students need to be a successful adult.

Teachers are already having students develop personalized learning strategies. Our recent Student Success Meetings are an example of students finding areas of the curriculum to concentrate on that is of interest in their future plans. In addition, several teachers will attend a Project Based Learning conference this summer so that new and exciting teaching strategies can be shared and used throughout the district in the near future. Students enjoy project based learning and it often puts fun into learning.

~ *Robert Green*
Elementary Principal

Counselor's Corner

Are You Feeling Anxious

When someone mentions wellness, what do you think? Eating right, exercise, getting enough sleep? Yes, all are important aspects of wellness. What we sometimes forget is the importance of emotional wellness. The mind/body connection is undeniably crucial in a happy, healthy life.

We often think that children experiencing difficulties are going through a stage, which is often true, or will "bounce back" from anything. However, mental health experts say that anxiety is now the number one most common mental health challenge among children. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 31% of adolescents, ages 13 to 18, suffer from an anxiety disorder of some kind, with girls at a slightly higher risk. So when is it a problem? When it affects the quality of life and interferes with activities you normally enjoy.

The tendency is for us to attempt to reassure an anxious child or to "fix" their problems for them. A better approach is to help your child develop a sense of resilience. "Resilience is built by working through adversity and difficult situations. It is difficult to pick yourself up and brush yourself off if you never fall down," says Dr. Zafar Mahmood.

According to Dr. Jane Sosland, an anxious child often seeks reassurance. However, they can't ever get enough. She suggests the following: "Suppose your child repeatedly asks you, 'Do you think I did okay in the concert?'" The more you reassure him, the more you unintentionally reinforce your child's belief that maybe he isn't okay. Instead, Sosland recommends acknowledging your child's worries and then asking how he can best manage his thoughts. Help him reframe, and, most of all, listen.

Experts give the following suggestions. First, encourage more face-to-face interactions over social media. Second, day-to-day, look for opportunities where your child can advocate for herself. And, let them face adversity. Everyone will face disappoint and adversity—those who succeed have developed the skills to deal with it.

Anxiety is treatable. If your child continues to struggle, resources such as your family physician or mental health professionals are good options.

~ Barbara Buck
Valley Heights Counselor

Community Education Corner

As the school year approaches its end, we reflect on the past year and contemplate the remainder of the year ahead. As individuals, we reflect on the input of our community and its framework. The boards that build this frame are all around us. They're the coffee shop where we gather to discuss our families and friends, and offer solutions to situations that arise within our world. They're in the churches where we congregate to find deeper meanings and look for answers that may not come in a book or from one another. They're in the schools that prepare and engage our children for the world that is beyond the safety of their homes and towns. They're in our after-school programs that offer our children a safe place to explore and create without fear of failure. They're on the courts, diamonds, and fields that teach us to work as a team and succeed and fail with dignity. And, most importantly, they're within each of us. Whether it's a wave on the road as you pass, a smile in the aisle of the store, reading a book with your child, or picking up the piece of trash as you walk down the sidewalk, all of these things make up the framework of our community and make it stronger. Henry Ford said "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." Let's build for success!

As we continue to strive for the strongest community we can, here are just a few things Community Education is doing to help paint the walls:

- ◆ Colts Round-Up after-school program is continuing to bring more Science, Technology and Engineering & Math (S.T.E.M.) into our programming. Robotics is becoming a staple in after-school as well as the summer. Our youth have opportunities that cannot be matched elsewhere.
- ◆ Partnerships with community colleges to introduce exciting new career paths and putting our young students in a position to get hands on experience within these fields.
- ◆ Continuing the After Prom party to keep our students safe.
- ◆ Adult education classes such as Cooking Classes, Barn Quilts, Jewelry Making, Yoga, Spin, Lifetime Fitness, Fitness Center access and much more.
- ◆ Summer enrichment program "Camp Exploration" for ages Kindergarten-6th grade.
- ◆ USDA free lunch program during operating days of Camp Exploration for ages 1-18.

This is just a coat of primer on the wall. As a community and its member, we all have a brush. It is up to each one of us to step forward and do what we can to paint the walls.

Valley Heights Community Education Two Towns, One Community

Tony Yungeberg, Director

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Spring Events

March

- 18 BOE Meeting @ 5:30
- 20 All School PLC Dismissal @ 2:05

April

- 3 All School PLC Dismissal @ 2:05
- 5 Spring Sports Pictures
- 6 JR/SR Prom & Afterprom
- 12 Chapter FFA Banquet
- 15 BOE Meeting @ 5:30
- 17 PreK-2nd Spring Pictures
All School PLC Dismissal @ 2:05
- 18 3rd-6th Spring Pictures
- 19 NO SCHOOL | Good Friday
- 21 Easter
- 22 FFA District Banquet
- 24 NHS Banquet @ 6:00
- 25 Highland Art Day
- 27 PAT Early Childhood Health & Safety Fair
- 29 Preschool Parent Meeting @ 5:00
Kindergarten Parent Meeting @ 6:00

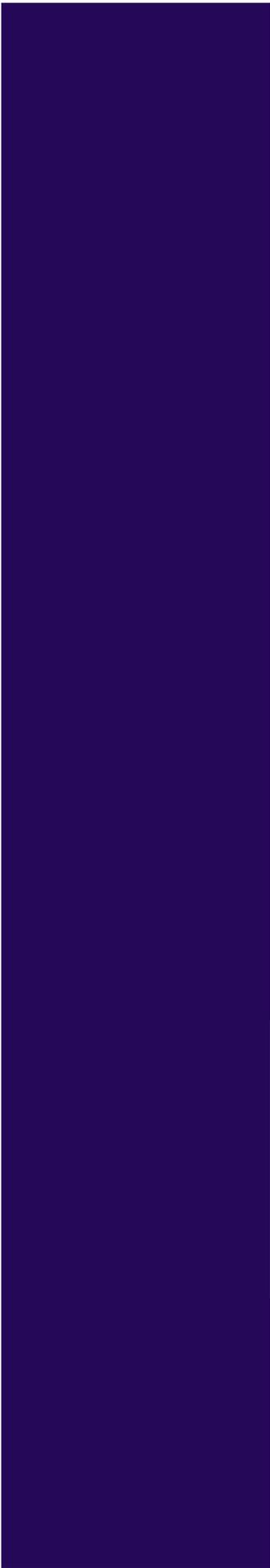
May

- 1 All School PLC Dismissal @ 2:05
Athletic Banquet @ 6:30
- 3 Elementary Play Day
- 7 Senior Night @ 6:00
Spring Fling @ 7:00
- 8 Rotary Banquet @ 6:30
- 14 Preschool & KinderPrep Last Day
Awards Night @ 7:00
- 15 Seniors Last Day
- 16 Elementary Awards Day
Preschool & KinderPrep Enrollment | 10:00 am–7:00 pm
- 17 Junior High Awards @ 11:00
Last Day of School | Dismiss @ Noon
- 18 Graduation @ 2:00
- 20 BOE Meeting @ 5:30

**Valley Heights
Elementary (K-2)**
307 E. Lincoln Street
Waterville, KS 66548
(785) 363-2530

**Valley Heights
Elementary (3-6)**
508 Chestnut Street
Blue Rapids, KS 66411
(785) 363-7693

**Valley Heights
JR/SR High**
2274 6th Road
Blue Rapids, KS 66411
(785) 363-2508



**Bullying Prevention and
Potential School Violence Hotline:**

(877) 626-8203

or

**Call the
Marshall County
Sheriff's Office
(785) 562-3141**



USD 498 Mission Board of Education

USD 498 Board of Education's mission is to provide an education system that will develop the highest level of achievement for all students, educators, and patrons by managing district policies and efficient use of resources.

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WE ARE LISTENING!

If you have questions, concerns, comments, or suggestions, please send them to:

Superintendent John Bergkamp
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