

**Fort Caspar**

# Academy

Volume 15, Issue 3



## From the Principal's Desk

It was exciting to see the number of parents and staff members who showed up for the November Governing Council meeting. Even more exciting was the thoughtful dialogue that occurred concerning the future of half-day kindergarten at Fort Caspar Academy. Every person who spoke modeled appropriate core virtues including respect and kindness. The Governing Council has set up an excellent

### Nov./Dec. Calendar

**Nov. 25-27** Thanksgiving Break

**Dec. 21** 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Ends  
Dismiss 11:30

**Dec. 22-Jan. 10** – Winter Break

**Jan. 11** – Students Return

forum for all parents to be heard and engaged in the direction of Fort Caspar Academy. In his book Good to Great, author Jim Collins describes the way great companies he studied did this: “*They didn’t use discussion as a sham process to let people “have their say” so that they could “buy in” to a predetermined decision.*

*The process was more like a heated scientific debate, with people engaged in a search for the best answers.”* It is wonderful not only to see our Governing Council put a process like this in place but also to see many parents take advantage of the opportunity.

During the discussion, some parents stated that they had not been informed about half-day kindergarten being an option during the enrollment process. Bev Jackson, the District Registrar, has confirmed that half-day kindergarten was not a part of the official enrollment guide prior to this year, and it has not been an option in the online enrollment process. Mrs. Jackson has

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

# News

November 2009

agreed to add half-day as an option in the enrollment guide this year and to call all parents who register online to offer them the option of half-day kindergarten. Thanks to her efforts, all incoming Fort Caspar Academy kindergarten parents will be informed of the half-day option this year.

As we look to the future of Fort Caspar Academy, parents and staff members must continue to engage in the type of civil discourse that occurred during this November meeting. Open dialogue is important not only in facilitating improvements but also in reinforcing core values and philosophies that have made this school so successful. Continually looking for ways to improve while simultaneously and faithfully defending those principles that have made Fort Caspar Academy the excelling school it is today will ensure the students of Fort Caspar Academy the best education possible.

Soon parents may have the opportunity to debate whether to keep the

traditional grading scale we are using at Fort Caspar Academy or move to the District grading scale used at all other schools in Natrona County School District. Here are the two options:

**Traditional**

93 – 100 A

85 – 92 B

77 – 84 C

70 – 76 D

**District Standard**

90 – 100 A

80 – 90 B

70 – 80 C

60 – 70 D

The staff at Fort Caspar Academy has had opportunities to discuss and debate this topic and is looking forward to hearing what parents have to say. Since the traditional grading scale is part of the Fort Caspar Academy Parent-Student-Staff-Handbook, changing to the District Standard will require a vote of all parents. This vote could take place around April. Between now and then, please take the time necessary to inform yourself on the pros and cons of this issue, and stay tuned to future Governing Council meetings for a chance to voice your opinion on this and other important issues.

In closing, your involvement as a parent in our school is critical. A dire need exists for parents to help with extra-curricular clubs either before or after school: Geography Club, Spelling

Club, and Student Newspaper Club are still in need of sponsors. Do you have an interest in starting a club for students or helping with a club? If you are not already volunteering, please consider assisting with a club. If you are able to spend a few minutes one night a week or every other week chaperoning students with these activities, please contact Office Manager, Judy Hamilton, at 253-3400. If you have not been involved, please make a commitment today! Your voice is important to our Parent Teacher Organization. Come to the Governing Council/PTO meetings - the next one will be January 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the gymnasium - to listen and share ideas. Decisions such as the grading scale choice have not been “*predetermined.*” Your ideas and input will be respected and are essential to helping “*the search for the best answers.*”

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

**Greetings from the Governing Council,**

We had our October meeting recently and, as always, we had some interesting

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

discussion that I want to share with you.

First of all, the winners of the “FCA is on Fire Fundraiser” are Scott Talbot and Randy Hill. Congratulations, your houses will be a little warmer this year and you have helped a great cause.

Next, we have the immediate need for several volunteers to help with projects. These will count towards your 10 hours of volunteer service for the semester.

We have the opportunity to get a team together and compete in the National Geography Bee. All we need is a parent or two who have an interest in helping our students excel in this extra-curricular activity. Contact Principal Larson if you would like to take this on.

[Randall.Larson@natronaschool.org](mailto:Randall.Larson@natronaschool.org)

We also have several students who are trying to put together a student newspaper; all they need is a parent who is willing to put a little time in and help them get organized and monitor their progress. Again, contact Principal Larson if you are interested. Our art teacher, Hank Washut, took on a project last year where all students made a self portrait and they were transferred onto 4 inch tiles. Mr. Washut needs several parents who would be willing to spend a few hours mounting these tiles and hanging them in the hallway. Des Bennion has agreed to organize this project. Contact him if you can help here. [mothership18@hotmail.com](mailto:mothership18@hotmail.com)). Is there anyone out there that has radio experience, or has the desire to help with our

FM broadcast program? We are looking for someone to record updates for this new avenue of communication with our parents. Contact Joe Parish ([tpower@bresnan.net](mailto:tpower@bresnan.net)) The next PTO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. Please remember that FCA was founded by parents, and parental involvement is one of the keys to our success. If you are involved already, thank you. You are appreciated. If you have not yet gotten engaged, please take a look at these opportunities and jump in.

Derek Jones  
2009 Governing  
Council Chairman  
[Derekj9@bresnan.net](mailto:Derekj9@bresnan.net)



## HEALTH NEWS FROM THE NURSE

I am continuing to work on Health Assessment Screenings on students. These assessments include height, weight,

vision, dental, and blood pressure. If you have questions about a referral, please call me.

We have had a healthy two-week period at FCA and I hope this continues. Health officials are suggesting that we will have another surge of H1N1 in January. I hope that they are wrong. Vaccination clinics are still in process. Check with your Physician or the Natrona County Health Department if you have questions.

With the holiday season approaching, I would like to encourage healthy living for you and your family, including nutrition, rest, and exercise. Please encourage your children to wash their hands frequently and keep their hands from their face, which will help prevent influenza and other illnesses.

Happy Holidays  
Kristy Thompson RN  
BSN  
FCA Nurse

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

### Kindergarten, Fifth/Sixth Grade Food Drive

A school-wide food drive for Joshua's Storehouse will begin December 1 and run through December 11. Please bring cans of food and easy-to-prepare boxed meals (Hamburger Helper, macaroni and cheese, etc.) to your classroom. Food will be counted and collected daily. The class that donates the most food will win a pizza party! This is a great way to put this month's virtue of generosity into action!

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

## P.E. Scuttle Bug

The month of November is here. It came sooner for me than others, I am guessing. I was gone for the month of October due to my son being in a serious car accident. The good news is he is okay and healing up very quickly. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers - it was very much appreciated by me and my family. The bad news is I am sort of behind in my lessons in P.E., so hopefully now that I am back at school we can get all caught up.

Usually the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are doing fitness testing in October, but that did not happen, so we will do that in December. There are 4 tests that they will need to do: the Pacer test, sit-ups/crunches test, push-up test, and the flexibility test. It is not a pass/fail, but instead a level of ability/fitness that they are scored on. Each student will get to a certain level of fitness, so all students will experience some degree of success. The younger grades will be working on personal and social behavior activities that involve teamwork, sportsmanship, fairness, and game etiquette/rules.

For November, all classes are working on activities/skills in a "centers" set-up, which will also include the traverse climbing wall. Please remind your child to remember his/her tennis shoes as they are necessary for the wall. Thanks for sharing your children with me!

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone, and enjoy your family over the holidays!

Mrs. Perri Shutts,  
P.E. teacher

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

## MUSIC NOTES!!

**Who:** All K-6 Fort Caspar Academy Students

**What:** It's Christmas Concert Time!!!

**When:** Monday, December 7, 2009

**Where:** NCHS Auditorium

**Time:** 6:30 P.M.

Hope to see you ALL there. We should have enough room for EVERYONE this year!!!

*Lovin' the Music,  
Lesli Beecher  
Elementary General  
Music*

FROM THE LIBRARY:

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Season's readings,  
Thank you to all of our great Fort Caspar Academy families. You spread the joy of reading. What a delight it was for me to see the students so fired up about books during our Scholastic book fair. I am overjoyed by the outpouring of volunteers willing to assist in all aspects of the book fair.

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

The financial success of the book fair will aid our library in purchasing new books and critical supplies. Thank you for your commitment to Fort Caspar Academy.

The need for assistance in the Library is ongoing. There are some projects that can even be completed from home. Please stop by the library if you are interested in helping out. I would be delighted to put you to work.

Please take the upcoming opportunities to spend extra time with your family spreading the joy of reading.

Paula Goodman  
Fort Caspar Academy  
Librarian

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

## **School Improvement**

Fort Caspar Academy has created a new school improvement plan. First, we assembled a team. Our team consists of several teachers, one paraprofessional, one parent representative, and Principal Larson. Our team then met and analyzed school data. We were so excited to see the amazing scores on PAWS and

NWEA Growth Assessments. From our data, the team created two new school improvement goals. For our first goal, we want 100% of FCA students to be reading at grade level. Our second goal is for every grade level that takes PAWS to increase its average score in reading. To reach these goals, we need parental help.

After careful analysis of our data, the school improvement team determined that our students can use a bit more work in the area of vocabulary. We will be working diligently on vocabulary building at school, but in order to reach our goal we need your help at home, also. Make vocabulary an emphasis at home. You can have a word for the day. (Make it a really good one like monotonous or nonchalant.) Have your child try to use that word five times during the day. Tell them their teachers will be extra excited if they can use their word of the day in the classroom. Another fun way to build vocabulary is by searching for synonyms. For example, if your child tells you his/her day was fun, ask him/her to think of three other words he/she could use instead of fun. When we work together on a common goal, our children can achieve great heights!

Nicole Rapp  
School Improvement  
Coordinator

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

### **Expedition Yellowstone!**

Our fifth-grade students in Mrs. Mooren's and Ms. Walsh's classes are gearing up for an exciting trip to Yellowstone in December. What could be better than Yellowstone National Park just before Christmas? Mrs. Mooren's class will depart from school on December 4 and return on December 7, and Ms. Walsh's will depart on December 11 and return on December 14. This is the first time students from Fort Caspar Academy will attend Expedition Yellowstone during the winter months. Mrs. Edleman's class will depart for Yellowstone on April 23 and return on April 26.

Expedition Yellowstone is a wonderful learning experience where the students travel to Yellowstone National Park to learn about the amazing resource we

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

have in our state. Brave parents help to chaperone the students by helping the students learn, hike, cook, and clean. The expedition is a once-in-a-lifetime trip for many of the students since we work closely with the park rangers and are taken to places the general public is not permitted to go.

Thank you to the Governing Council for financially supporting our trip and to everyone who purchased items from the fundraiser Cherrydale.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO  
CHECK OUT THE  
LOST AND FOUND –  
IT IS FULL OF ITEMS  
THAT WANT TO BE  
FOUND.**

*What another great month October brought us; our grade level contest started out with a bang. You brought in a total of 2,906 Box Tops, with Mrs. Shutts' class being the overall winner for the month. Make sure you check out all the classes and where your class is on the Box Top chart hanging in the last hall before going out to the playground. Remember, the top cla*

ss winner will not only receive a treat, but also get to have the Box Top Trophy displayed in their class room for that month.

I got to wondering how our school is doing compared to other schools in Casper, and let me tell you how awesome our school is: out of all the schools in Casper that participated in the Box Tops, FCA is ranked number one with a total

earnings of \$3,924.00. But if you think that is great, how do you think we compare statewide with the other schools? I was so excited to find out that FCA is also ranked number one out of all the schools in the state that participate in Box Tops. Then I got to looking at how we're doing nationwide. I was absolutely amazed: out of 101,535 schools, FCA is in

the top 500, ranking 467<sup>th</sup>.

I am so proud of our school and the kids and all the parental support that we get for this program. Thank you all for helping to put us on the map. Now to stay on top we need everyone to keep sending in those Box Tops.

Karen Rowe,  
Box Top Coordinator  
473-1217

## **WINTER WONDERLAND**

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.