

Fort Caspar

Academy

Volume 15, Issue 2

News

October 2009



From the Principal's Desk

"For now you know one of the greatest principles of success; if you persist long enough you will win."
Og Mandino

How are we doing at Fort Caspar Academy compared to other elementary schools in the District? One set of comparative data we have comes from the statewide PAWS assessment. Students are given this assessment in reading, writing, and math in third through sixth grade. Data from this assessment can be used to make comparisons between our grade-level

Oct./Nov. Calendar

Oct. 22, 23 No School – Parent/Teacher Conference

Nov. 20 Spirit Day

Nov. 25-27 Thanksgiving Break

performance on PAWS and the performance of the other twenty-one elementary schools in Natrona County three times in each of those grade levels. Fort Caspar Academy's scores in reading, writing, and math on the 2009 spring PAWS assessment ranked in the top five schools out of twenty-two at every grade level for all three subjects! In fact, we had five number one rankings out of twelve possible. This is evidence of the great work being done here. We are proud of the hard work of our talented staff and students!

Natrona County School District #1 recognizes schools as *focus*, *unclassified*, or *excelling* in the areas of reading, writing, and math based upon student performance and growth on standardized tests (PAWS and NWEA) along with overall school improvement on those assessments. Fort Caspar Academy was recently informed that due to the stellar performance of our students, we were once again granted *excelling school* status in reading and writing. However, despite our students scoring well in math, the District did not grant us *excelling school* status in math. We raised many questions about the process used to make this determination and have received assurances that

improvements will be made to the process. The main reason we will not be granted *excelling* status in math is that comparisons with previous years PAWS results from Fort Caspar Academy indicate that scores in math were lower. No schools in the District received *excelling* status in all three areas this year. We are determined to not only maintain our *excelling* status in reading and writing this year, but to also regain our *excelling* school status in math.

How are we doing? We are doing well. At the same time, given the talent level and work ethic of our staff and the excellent parent support, we believe we can do even better. We recently formed a Building Leadership Team made up of representatives from every grade level and stakeholder group including classified, support staff, and parents. The Building Leadership Team has worked hard to study data and from that data develop school improvement goals. Our two main goals are to have 100% of students reading at or above grade level as measured by NWEA and to have all of our grade levels improve their reading scores on PAWS. Goal teams are now in the process of developing and implementing strategies that

will help all of our students improve in reading. While these goals will necessitate small changes in the way we are currently operating, we are being purposeful to avoid changes that would negatively impact the high level of student success our students are currently achieving.

Our vision is to develop a system at Fort Caspar Academy that can be emulated by other schools and districts. With the help of committed parents like you and an extremely talented and hard working staff, we can become that model and assist in ensuring all students in all of our schools have an equal opportunity for success and lifelong achievement. We are not there yet, but if we persist long enough, we will win!



HEALTH NEWS FROM THE NURSE

Thank you for your help in getting your child's immunizations current. This is a big process every year.

I will be starting health assessments for kindergarten, first, and

fourth graders, which will include their height/weight, vision check, and dental check. If you have any questions, please call the nurse's office.

We have had a few cases of nausea/vomiting this fall, and we are also seeing an increase in upper respiratory infections due to the season flu and H1N1. If you are interested in getting the flu vaccine, contact the health department or your own doctor. The wave of these illnesses should decrease with time. If you have any questions, feel free to call me.

Safety is always a concern at school, especially on the playground. I know that we need to have a balance between fun playground activities and safety rules. I always ask that students do not hang upside down from the bars due to the possibility of cervical neck and head injuries.

Hand washing, hand washing, hand washing; probably the best defense against infection. If parents use good hand-washing practices, so will their

children. Thanks for helping keep your children safe and healthy.

Kristy Thompson RN
School Nurse

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

Music Notes

The students have been working on Music Standard #1: Creative Expression, Music Standard #2: Aesthetic Perception, & Music Standard #3: Historical & Cultural Context. Some classes have listened to music written by: Edvard Grieg, "Hall of the Mt. King," Heitor Villa-Lobas, "The Little Train of the Caipira," Ferde Grofé's "Death Valley Suite" & the American Composer, John Philip Sousa, "Stars & Stripes Forever."

Grades 4, 5, & 6 have been working on the computer program Music Ace 2. Grade 4 is also beginning the recorder, and grades 5 & 6 will begin the

rhythm dictation tests this next nine weeks. "Music is Listening," and I hope the students have been sharing their "music lessons" with you.

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

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

From the Library:

We will be conducting a Scholastic Book Fair November 9 thru 11. This will serve the purpose of putting more books into the hands of our students as well as raising funds for the Library. Don't miss the wonderful family night that the activities committee has planned Monday, November 9, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. One of the greatest gifts that can be shared by a family is the joy of reading. Please stop by the Library and see what the Destination Book Fair is all about.

If you are interested in volunteering in our

library on a regular basis or for the book fair, please stop by the Library and sign up. Thank you to the wonderful volunteers here at Fort Caspar Academy that make the Library a great reading destination.

Thanks for your support.

Paula Goodman
Fort Caspar Academy
Librarian

BOX TOPS

Wow, what a great start to the school year! We collected over 6,000 Box Tops in September. Mrs. Yeager's 1st grade class won the Box Top Trophy with 693 Box Tops. Mrs. Fisher's Kindergarten class was 2nd place with 630 Box Tops, and Mrs. Brown's 1st grade class came in 3rd place with 500 Box Tops. To see what the other classes got, check out the Box Top

chart hanging in the last hall before going out to the playground.

Our first check will include everything we have collected from March through September.

Don't forget about our grade-level contest going on in October and November. Keep sending in those Box Tops so that we can receive another big check in the spring.

Thank you for your support for this program and to those who helped cut and bundle the Box Tops.

*Karen Rowe,
Box Top
Coordinator
473-1217*

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

Fall Into Thanksgiving

U	S	E	V	A	E	L	N	F	K
D	N	A	P	P	L	E	S	F	S
H	O	S	E	U	H	Y	D	O	A
A	I	O	N	M	N	L	N	L	S
R	T	A	F	P	N	I	E	I	H
V	I	M	U	K	M	M	I	A	L
E	D	U	T	I	T	A	R	G	G
S	A	W	I	N	D	F	F	E	N
T	R	O	I	V	U	E	V	L	S
R	T	E	A	N	L	R	R	E	S

GRATITUDE
FAMILY
LEAVES
FRIENDS
PUMPKIN
APPLES

HARVEST
FOLIAGE
WIND
FOOD
FUN
TRADITIONS

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