

Hello again and greetings from USD 467!

First this week I'd like to recognize some recent individual and team accomplishments. Last Saturday several WHS musical students took part in the Southwest Kansas Music Educators Association's Honor Band and Honor Choir performances in Dodge City. Members of the Honor Band were Kyra Case, Maya Dorantes, Amelia Koehn and Connor Krenzel. The Honor Choir members were Nicole Biermann, Kaiya Gerstberger, Sophie Gerstberger and Tristen Porter. Each one of these students had to audition to become a part of the band or choir. Also on Saturday, the WCJHS Braves girls and boys basketball teams traveled to Healy to compete in the tournament there. At the end of the day the girls were the Champions and the boys were the runners-up. And back to football for a moment-the Topeka Capital-Journal newspaper announced its picks for the 2018 All-State football team players. For the 8-Man Division 1 group, three WCHS players received Honorable Mention recognition for their play this year: Jesse Hermosillo, a senior, was selected as one of the linemen, and Kayde Rietzke and Sheldon Whalen, both sophomores, were selected as two of the backs. Congratulations to each one of these student musicians and athletes on their individual and team accomplishments!

So far in these newsletters I have discussed the core principals of Character Development. Last week I began with the first of the two parts of Responsible Decision Making and Problem Solving-to develop, implement, and model responsible decision making skills. This week I will discuss the second part, develop, implement, and model effective problem solving skills.

These steps include: develop self-control skills, (for example, stop, take a deep breath, and relax); identify and illustrate the problem; identify desired outcome; identify possible solutions and the pros and cons of each solution; identify and select the best solution; put the solution into action; reflect on the outcome of the solution; apply self-control skills; identify the problem and understand reason for the problem; identify and analyze desired outcome; generate possible solutions and analyze the pros and cons of each solution; select and implement the best solution; analyze the outcome of the solution; identify specific feelings about the problem and apply appropriate self-control skills; state what the problem is and identify the perspectives of those involved; identify desired outcome and discuss if it is attainable; use creativity and innovation to generate multiple possible solutions and discuss each option in relation to resources, situation, and personal principles; identify best solution and analyze if it is likely to work; and, generate a plan for carrying out the chosen option; evaluate the effects of the solution; understand how to make adjustments and amendments to the plan.

As a review, Social Emotional Character Development is teaching, practicing, modeling and encouraging essential personal life habits that are universally understood as making people good human beings and citizens. It is learning with our heads, hearts and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens and to be empathetic and ethical individuals. In schools SECD takes many forms, including programs that specifically address safe and drug-free schools, service learning, emotional literacy, bullying and violence prevention, the embracing of diversity and other similar initiatives.

The 11 Principles of Character Education: The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character; The school defines

“character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing; The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development; The school creates a caring community; The school provides students with opportunities for moral action; The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed; The school fosters students’ self-motivation; The school staff is an ethical learning community that share responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students; The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative; The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort; and, The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

Over the past few years, the Kansas State Board of Education has developed a vision for student education: Kansans Can-Kansas Leads the World in the Success of Each Student. Academics are important. Nonacademic skills are equally important. Academics alone do not ensure a student is successful.

The Kansas vision for education requires that we educate the whole child to ensure he/she 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. I will break these into two sections, Academic and Civic. I will begin discussing the Academic part next week.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have specific questions or want more information about what’s happening in the buildings or district, don’t hesitate to contact Lori Maxwell, WCES Principal, at 375-2314, Delbert Schmidt, WCJSHS Principal, at 375-2213, or me at 375-4677. Thanks!

Keith Higgins