

Hello again and greetings from USD 467!

This week I will discuss two items that will be bringing changes in the district next year. The first is the district is putting in place a weekly time for teacher inservice. On most Wednesdays from September through April, the district will dismiss classes at 2:30 on Wednesday afternoon. This weekly inservice time is being put in place from our KESA meetings; as the state puts more demands on the schools to prepare our students for not only going to a 2-year or 4-year college or university, we also need to give them the opportunity to be successful going to a vocational school, for military service, and to be successful entering into the workforce. With these added demands on the school, we also have to give our teachers the opportunity to become better prepared. One way to accomplish this goal is to provide more staff development time.

In our KESA discussions we felt that having the early dismissal once per week, plus adding an extra half hour for each of those days, making 1.5 hours per week for 30 weeks, gives the teachers an extra 45 hours, or almost 7 days, of professional development. We could have scheduled those as inserviced days throughout the year, but that would have shortened the actual teaching time with the students. Plus, having a topic to work on each week gives the staff time to research or practice new ideas and techniques with their classes to see what will work best for student achievement.

The district understands that this is a pretty big change; however, we hope that the organizations that already work with kids on Wednesdays afterschool and possibly have some students in the Junior-Senior high help the younger students with homework or perhaps the Public Library or Leoti Recreation Commission will have ideas to offer. Also the school will run buses at dismissal time. We hope this will not be a burden on parents and will give the district greatly needed additional time for teacher professional development. Thank you!

The second item also comes from our KESA discussion and also in trying to keep up-to-date with the demands that our students need more technology oppprtunities in the classroom. As students graduate high school and go into whatever fields they choose, as I mentioned above, they need the ability to use the tools to be successful. All colleges and universities require students to use computers to do research, write papers, and communicate with their teachers and classmates; they receive assignments and submit papers, collaborate with members in their classes and do research and share that research with others. This prepares them to be successful in their future careers. The students at WCJSHS already are taking part in this process.

Over the past few years, teachers at WCJSHS have purchased Chromebook computers, using grants, spending money they receive for teaching dual-credit college classes here and any other way they can get funds. There are approximately 100 Chromebooks available for the students in grades 7-12 to use in the classrooms-they are not allowed to take them out of the building as there are not enough for all the students, and, they are getting "old," nearing the time they will no longer be able to be updated. Therefore, the board has made the decision to go to a 1:1 Chromebook program starting next school year. 1:1 means that every student in grades 7-12 will be assigned a Chromebook that they will use in their classrooms and can take home to use.

To help offset the cost, the Junior High has been selected to be part of a Univeristy of Missouri research grant to see how this kind of technology and what new

curriculums can be developed that will help those age of students. We are one of 29 schools in Kansas and Missouri to be part of the test group. This grant provides new Chromebooks for next year's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, in addition to professional development training in presenting new ideas and techniques in student use of technology for junior high students. We hope to use some of the Wednesday inservice time to work with the entire staff in these new ideas. So not only do we receive new equipment, we get to learn new research based ideas and curriculum to teacher our kids!

As you well know school is about finished for this year. Please continue to keep an eye out for kids as you drop them off in the mornings and pick them up in the afternoons, especially as the weather gets nicer and more kids are walking and biking to school. High school Baccalaureate is next week Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium at 7:00 pm and graduation is on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 in the gym. Sixth grade promotion is with the elementary spring music program on the 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the auditorium. We hope to see you there!

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I hope to share the good things that are happening at USD 467! 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!  
Educationally,

Keith Higgins, Superintendent