



POUNCE

STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY



FEB. '15
EXCELSIOR SPRINGS
SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY TIES

The Excelsior Springs Community is tied together, not by the proximity of our homes, but by our caring for each other. Perhaps the best case that exemplifies this is that of two boys, brothers that have seen firsthand just what care and support is available here.

Noah and Kane Marker suffer from muscle and joint development disorders. They have lived in Excelsior Springs their entire lives. Though presented with challenges that impact their everyday life, each has found success both in and out of school. Noah, 14 years old and a freshman at the high school, has received services from the Excelsior Springs Hospital since he was 4 years old. Kane, the younger brother is 9 years old and in 3rd grade at Westview Elementary.

The boys use Excelsior Spring Hospital for all of their Physical Therapy, x-rays and lab work. They have unfortunately had to also use the ER on several occasions. The family feels that they receive more 1:1 attention, with less hustle and bustle. They feel at ease with the environment. It is after all, close to home, so it saves time and gas, and the quality of care they receive is top notch.

Each visit length varies, as it is tailored to each child's need for that day. In therapy they work on being able to help themselves more with transfers, standing up, dressing themselves and their favorite part is strength building so they do better at their YMCA Challenger sporting games!

They actually look forward to coming for therapy and when

they miss they always ask why they can't come. The therapists make hard work a lot of fun for them.

Radiology and ER has seen Noah for multiple respiratory illnesses, and Radiology and ER treated Kane for a broken leg when he decided to try and superman himself off of his bed!

Both boys get very nervous with any medical related visits, especially lab draws. The people in lab have a lot of patience with both of them, and help them to feel at ease. Due to their individual conditions, both use the lab on a regular basis. They see the same physical therapist each visit they come, so they have built very strong relationships. The people in lab, x-ray, and ER

..... SEE PAGE THREE

Mark Your
Calendar 

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

THURS., FEB. 12, 2015
Elementary Release: 11:53 a.m.
Secondary Release: 10:38 a.m.
PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES:
1:00-7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB. 13, 2015
NO SCHOOL
Teacher In-Service

MONDAY, FEB 16, 2015
NO SCHOOL
President's Day



Dr. David Lawrence

SUPERINTENDENT SPOTLIGHT

City and School District Partnership

In December, the Excelsior Springs City Council and Board of Education held a joint meeting to discuss items that the two entities can work on in the future. Some of the issues included truancy, community surveying, and discussion on how the City and school district can market our town and school district together. Another idea discussed at the joint meeting included the possibility of waiving building permit fees to stimulate new construction.

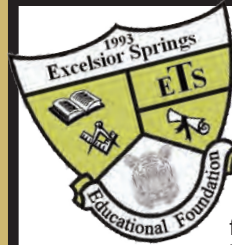
In the past, the school district and city have worked together very well. The school district has donated land for the construction of the new community center; Parks & Rec use school district facilities for their programming at a reduced rate, and the school district purchases fuel for their buses from the city at a discounted rate.

Excelsior Springs School District has been allowed representation on the Community Center Steering committee. Working together to develop a better community and school district has been the goal of our collaborative relationship and thus far we have been successful. As a school district our number one priority is the students that attend our school district. By partnering with the city to improve our community the children of Excelsior Springs will have a better place to live. A successful scenario is one that would allow students to return to their community to live and work. We would also hope that the students that return will raise their families in this community. Together, we can make our school district and community a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

A second joint City Council and Board of Education meeting will take place in February. Survey information will be presented; price quotes for marketing strategies, update on building permit waivers, demographics of truant students, and legal opinions of establishing a truancy court in a municipal court will be shared.

Excelsior Springs School District looks forward to continued collaboration with the city council in the future. Our children deserve a great community to grow up in just like the adults. Thank you for your continued support of the school district and the city. If you have comments or questions about our school district please give me a phone call at 816-630-9200, visit our website www.essd40.com and send me an email by using the tab "Ask the Superintendent" at the top of the page. You are always welcome to stop by for a personal visit at 300 W. Broadway.

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS EDUCATION FOUNDATION



The Excelsior Springs Educational Foundation was founded a little over 20 years ago, to properly account for donations and fundraising activities that support a broader variety of educational activities not ordinarily funded by the Excelsior Springs School District that benefit students,

staff and patrons.

The Foundation is an IRS defined tax-exempt charitable organization, which means donations received by the Foundation can be used as a tax deduction on individual or business income tax returns.

We enable people with philanthropic interests to easily and effectively support the issues in "Our District" they care about. We offer all the tax advantages of charitable giving, the long-term benefits of endowment funding, and the ability to establish a legacy fund in the name of you, your family or a loved one.

The Foundation manages a large number of unrestricted and discretionary funds providing important financial benefits to donors. There are currently 35 separate accounts established to track such activities as After Prom, various Scholarships, Band Boosters, ES Soccer, Health Room, Tiger Football Booster Club, and Westview PAWS just to mention a few. This structure provides that the donor can direct how their donation is used or leave it to the discretion of the Foundation Board and ensures that activities meet widely accepted accounting principles.



Molly McGovern, Edu. Foundation President

The Foundation has historically maintained a relatively low profile focused on fund management. Over the last couple of years, however, the Foundation Board has embarked on a more deliberate conversation to facilitate a healthier, stronger, more vibrant community through cooperative partnerships community-wide.

- We believe in the power of education to enrich and improve our community through learning and increased opportunity
- We believe in the power of early childhood education and know that it's the early years of a child's education that have the greatest impact on their success later in life

- We believe the Foundation can encourage the formation of school partnerships with local businesses to provide work-based learning experience and internships for students
- We believe the Foundation possesses the leadership to inspire others to join us on this path...for our students, our businesses and our community.

It is not enough for students to graduate with basic knowledge or skills – they need connection with the community to achieve success. During the course of the coming year, the Foundation intends to:

- Raise our visibility in the community,
- Support district efforts toward Early Childhood Education and the value of parent involvement,
- Improve Scholarship Offerings, and
- Strive to create opportunities for community partnerships.

"THE KEY TO ANY COMMUNITY IS THE CONNECTION IT HAS WITH IT'S PEOPLE"

vary- but they all know both boys by name and are quick to greet them.

Excelsior Springs Hospital has a continuum of care (ER, Orthopedics, and Therapy) all in one place, all with highly skilled providers, close to home. They offer Pediatric therapy, and have therapist with special interest in treating high school athletes and skilled in sports rehabilitation. The hospital is proud to tell everyone that they are the home to Dr. Justice and his partner Dr. Cornette. They specialize in pediatric orthopedic surgery, hand surgery, spine and scoliosis surgery, orthopedic trauma surgery, total joint replacement, foot and ankle surgery and orthopedic oncology.

But visits to the hospital, therapy sessions, and labs take a toll on their education. Missing time from school can be difficult for any student, but even more so when you are battling a lifelong condition. Finding a balance to ensure that both boys receive their care and their education is critical.

To assist with their treatments, the school bus drops the boys off after school to get them to their therapy appointments. The therapist provides the school with exercise programs and stretching activities to be used during PE classes. The hospital has had the school therapist attend professional continuing education classes at the hospital to help everyone gain

new knowledge and keep current with treatment strategies. The therapy team at the hospital and the school district therapist work hand in hand to figure out needed adaptive equipment for the boys, and the best way to make it work for them in the school environment. Therapy staff at the hospital offer training to the para's and nurses to increase their comfort with helping the boys move around, and the boys comfort level with being moved around by the para's. With after school sports/activities, the therapy team has worked and brainstormed to find the best way for the boys to participate and stay involved.

With the special needs associated with their muscles and joints, two of our very own are able to succeed in and out of the classroom. Both boys are doing well in school, with Noah participating in Marching Band and Kane tackling anything he puts his mind to, whether it

be in school or sports.

The key to any community is the connection it has with its people. The students of our school district benefit from the care and attention they receive from organizations like the Excelsior Springs Hospital.



Noah Marker

Kane Marker

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Collaboration Time is Vital to Creating Effective Schools



Over the last decade, there has been a lot of research regarding successful school improvement. The research is clear: One of the critical conditions for the student success is designated time for teachers to meet and collaborate during the regular school day. These studies have all reinforced the concept of collaboration and intervention time being built into the schedule, providing teachers time to collaborate during the day in order to build their professional practice and foster shared responsibility for student learning.

Many educators believe that collaborative time for teachers to sustain school improvement may be more important than instructional equipment or facilities. Six years ago, Excelsior Springs School District set out on this path to improvement, specifically, dismissing school an hour early on Wednesdays to use as a time for teachers to collaborate.

The work the teachers and administrators of Excelsior Springs

School District have accomplished related to school improvement has focused on improving classroom practices that result in improved outcomes for all students.

Exactly, what does ESSD accomplish during these hour-long sessions?

- Meet in teams to review student work against standards
- Use their insights to select targets for instructional improvement
- Learn about data to guide instructional decision making
- Receive regular support from an Instructional Coach, lead teacher, or building administrator

Teachers have seen improvements in student achievement, behavior, and attitude because of the time devoted to collaboration. Teachers trace their students' gains in the classroom to the revisions in discipline, curriculum, and assessment practices they had achieved working as a group. Sensing the district's coherence and a consistency of expectations,

some teachers formed teams to plan their own professional development and ensure that lessons were aligned across grade levels.

There are many benefits for students, as well, resulting from teacher collaboration: Collegiality breaks the isolation of the classroom, conveys daily rewards, and stimulates enthusiasm. Instead of grasping for the single dramatic event as the main source of pride, teachers are more able to identify and celebrate a pattern of accomplishments within and across classrooms. It avoids the sink-or-swim, trial-and-error mode that beginning teachers usually face, bringing experienced and beginning teachers closer together. Teachers support one another's strengths and accommodate weaknesses, greatly increasing the available pool of ideas and materials. Ultimately, our schools become better organized to examine new ideas and methods.

Over time, our teachers who

work closely together on matters of curriculum and instruction find themselves better equipped for classroom work. They take considerable satisfaction from professional relationships that withstand differences in viewpoints and occasional conflict. Ultimately, teacher collaboration sparks much deeper conversation, more complete answers, and better solutions. What does this add up to for students? Teachers in Excelsior Springs School District have taken the bull by the horns, and have been deliberate in how they collaborate. They have accepted responsibility for being the change agent needed for school improvement.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Five seniors let us on in their plans for next year:

Matt Beckwith

"Attend the University of Missouri. Study meteorology and journalism to be the next great weatherman"

Lyle Vanfossan

"Attend Missouri State University. Study computer science and one day open up a center for young students to teach, help them explore and learn more about computers."

Cody Madison

"Serve my country and see the world"

Cara Zacny

"Go to college to study graphic design. Become a freelance designer for companies so I can choose who to work for and on what projects."

Bailey Jarmin

"Attend Truman State University. Study Agriculture and Biology to work in the field of Conservation. I want to teach people about conserving our world."

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If you build it...



...they will come

Team 1737, is the Excelsior Springs High School robotics team that plans to take over the Kansas City Regionals this year. Each year, teams from all over the area design, build and compete in a robotics competition.

Imagine receiving a secret box on January 3rd with instructions and materials completely unknown to your team, having 6 weeks to design, build, test, and perfect a team robot capable of competing in an arena against other robotic teams. That is exactly what Project X plans to do.

When asked the one thing that he sees from his team that surprises him, Mr. Meade answered, "Ingenuity, we see students coming up with ways to solve problems that I would never think of. Our students imagine, design, and build solutions that are truly remarkable."

Team 1737 is comprised of nearly 40 students from Excelsior Springs High School. Students have an extensive application process to get involved with the team. Students apply by detailing what skills and attributes they have that can benefit the team. They apply as if it were a job. Every student has responsibilities and demands that benefit the team. This approach gives students the opportunity to be responsible. "Robotics is an incredible opportunity for any student to explore their interest in science, technology, engineering, and math related job skill



areas. This program also teaches students the value of a strong work ethic and inspired dedication. Students involved in the program have the opportunity to work with like-minded people in a cooperative but competitive atmosphere where they see real-world science put to use. It is truly a 'varsity sport for the mind,'

said Wiley Meade Team 1737 Robotics Coach.

The robotics competitions have been around for years, but school participation in these events has skyrocketed as of late. Team 1737 participates in FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology). FIRST's founder, Dean Kamen, explains the mission of the organization as, "To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders."

Team 1737 will compete in the Kansas City Regionals March 12th-14th. The event will be held at the Metropolitan Community College-Business and Technology Center in Kansas City. What can you do to help Team 1737? Team 1737 is looking for mentors in engineering, programming, electrical, business or marketing to help the team bring home a championship. If you or someone you know is interested in being a part of Team 1737, contact Wiley Meade at (816) 630-9210 ext 2013.



Implementing New Technology

The Excelsior Springs School District begins their 1:World Program with all 5th, 6th, and 9th grade students receiving an iPad for school use.

Why is the school district implementing individual devices?

The most important reason is that our 1:World Program will improve teaching and learning. Other reasons include students bringing learning home, saving money on textbooks and paper, and helping students gain an advantage when they leave high school. The bottom line is that the driving force is what is best for our students.

What training will teachers receive?

All of our schools already have computers available for our students. But moving to one device for every student changes the classroom environment, and not every teacher will be comfortable with that shift. If we don't know what to do with it, what we've bought is a really expensive paperweight. Teachers have been trained, and will continue to receive additional training on how to use it to enhance their instruction and how to build students' creative, collaboration and problem-solving skills with the individual devices. Training will also include teaching to track student progress and provide more rapid feedback.

What about security?

One of the chief concerns we've heard from parents is protecting the security and privacy of their child. Excelsior Springs School District will use the devices as an opportunity to teach students to be good digital citizens – ones who are mindful of what they share and how they treat people online. The district also uses Google Education accounts, so students can only email teachers and fellow students from their school accounts. Some schools lock down the devices so tight that in-classroom use becomes frustrating for not only the students, but the teacher. Consequently, the devices collect dust in the classroom. While other schools put in too few controls and leave the devices wide open, she says. Our filters and controls will strike a balance so they don't hamper student learning.

How is it working out so far?

Although it is very early in the process, our teachers are impressed by how students have risen to the new expectations of greater responsibility and independence. Many teachers are enjoying the freedom and flexibility that a 1:World classroom provides since they are no longer the lone expert in the room. More students are taking the initiative to extend their learning during class time and at home with the ability to access such a wide variety of Web resources and collaborate with others. Teachers are also expressing a renewed enthusiasm for teaching as they see kids get excited and take more ownership of their learning. While there is definitely a steep learning curve for teachers in how to effectively manage and teach in a 1:World environment, teachers are saying they see the benefits of bringing more of the 21st century into their teaching and student learning.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Linda Steffens

First Grade Teacher at
ELKHORN ELEMENTARY
BS in Elementary Education
19th year of teaching

What do you do?

I have the privilege of teaching first graders how to become better readers, writers, mathematicians and critical thinkers. I build a classroom community that fosters positive social skills, where each learner is valued, respected, and responsible for helping reach their individual goals as well as our classroom goals.

What is your favorite part of your job?

The favorite part of my job is getting to interact with kids on a daily basis and watch each of them get so excited when they meet their own personal goal or when a fellow peer in the class meets his/her goal. I love knowing that I get to be a part of inspiring them to be the best they can be!

What do you do when you're not at work?

When not at work, I enjoy spending time with my husband and two children by attending their various activities as well as going to Royals and St. Louis Cardinals baseball games.

ELKHORN ELEMENTARY

34684 Hwy 10
Ph. 816.630.9270 • Fax 816.630.9274
Larry Nelson, Principal



THEN & NOW

Elkhorn Elementary is the smallest elementary school in the Excelsior Springs School District. It is known for its dedicated teachers and community involvement that retains a small town feel.

The original elementary school in the Elkhorn area opened its doors as a one roomed school house. The school was originally known as the Nichols School which was named after Samuel Nichols, the landowner. Nichols sold the property to a Ray County Board of Directors for \$70.00. According to the original land deed at the Ray County Courthouse, filed in 1894, the agreement was that it would be "used for the benefit of the schools".

Around the year 1900, the school name was changed to one more descriptive of its location which was on the south side of a sunny slope. The school was then re-named Sunnyside School and was in operation from 1895 to 1959. The original building where the school was located has been turned into a house and still sits on 10 Highway in its original location.

During the year 1959, a building was built to house students that went to small country schools in the area for grades first

through eighth. It was named R-7 for the seven schools in the area that were consolidated into one building. The R-7 building was in operation until the late 1960's when the Excelsior Springs School district annexed it to become part of its school district and changed its name to Elkhorn Elementary. Students were then divided between the Excelsior Springs, Richmond, Orrick, and Lawson school districts.

The new Elkhorn Elementary ran as a first through eighth grade building until the opening of Lewis Middle School in downtown Excelsior Springs. Grades sixth through eighth then went to Lewis, and Elkhorn became a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school. Eventually the number of students attending Elkhorn began to grow larger than the building could hold. In the fall of 1997, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to start a re-construction project on the school. A library/media center, gymnasium, and additional classrooms were added to accommodate the growing number of students. Today, Elkhorn Elementary School houses 230 students in kindergarten through fifth grades.



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PALS Expands Student Opportunities

Do you ever find yourself asking what opportunities there are as a parent to help your child and others through the school? If so, becoming a member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PALS) at Lewis Elementary School may just be what you've been looking for.

The Lewis PALS works to raise money for student activities and enrichment opportunities for students. They sponsor book fairs, movie nights, a spring dance, teacher luncheons, and other

activities to make student experiences positive and rewarding for kids and teachers alike.

At Lewis Elementary, there are currently 10 parents serving students as members of the Lewis Parent Teacher Organization. They meet monthly on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm. Anyone who would like to become a part of the Lewis Elementary PALS can come to a meeting, contact the PALS President Molly Pranke, or call the school for more information.



PALS HAS SOME CORE VALUES THAT STEER THEIR WORK:

Collaboration: We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.

Commitment: We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.

Accountability: We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.

Respect: We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.

Inclusivity: We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.



Now Enrolling for the 2015-2016 School Year!

Excelsior Springs School District Missouri Preschool Project



- ♥ The Excelsior Springs School District is currently taking applications for students to attend full day preschool during the 2015-2016 school year
- ♥ Tuition is income-based and affordable
- ♥ Nutritious meals are provided by the school and included in your tuition
- ♥ Fill out an application at Lewis Elementary, Westview Elementary, or Central Office

Call Lewis @630-9290
Westview @ 630-9260
for more information!

Space is limited to 20 students per classroom, sign up now!





POUNCE



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