



Bulldog Bites

Nikiski Middle/High School

November 20, 2012



FROM THE PRINCIPAL-MR. CARSTENS

As we enter into the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, I am reminded about what I am thankful for. First and foremost on my list is my wonderful family who stands behind me during every step of my journey. Secondly, I am thankful for this position I am in where I am allowed to lead a group of people down a path of cooperation and collaboration. I truly believe that this is the premier place to be on the entire peninsula and I would not exchange it for the world. The people in this building are incredible professionals who consistently and constantly look out for what is best for kids.

When I look back over the past couple of months, there are some events that have contributed to us as a school and are shaping the direction we are headed. As a result of Mr. Bird's mock convention, I was given the opportunity to meet with some of our state representatives and senators. I have been able to develop a positive relationship with them and have had the opportunity to have conversations to voice what we need here at Nikiski. Hopefully I will have more to report later in the school year.

One last event where I was able to point out our positives was at our last school board meeting. The school board and district office administration were treated to a smorgasbord of positivity from the North Road. I was able to show a video of the mock convention (thanks to Mr. Kornstad's digital photo class), present a banner and bumper stickers (thanks to Mr. Johnson's CAD/CAM class), and report out on the professional collaboration we are doing as a staff (thanks to my teacher leaders who have stepped up over the past year).

Like I said before, this is the premier place to be on the entire peninsula.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!!



Mr. Bird with Mock Convention participants and artists Lauren Countryman, Colleen Dempsey, and Haley Conti.

MR. BOSTIC - VICE PRINCIPAL

As the sun rises just over the horizon and snow begins to blanket the countryside, it is a perfect time to reflect upon the success and celebration that has been bestowed upon Nikiski Middle/High School. Each day brings the little celebrations of holding a door open, greeting a stranger in the hallway, telling someone that they look nice, and smiling just because. These little celebrations build the cultural components of compassion, integrity, courage, respect, and happiness. A positive culture builds success, prosperity, and harmony. We at Nikiski MS/HS would like you to know what our culture has built:



- A student led mock convention that included all students 6-12 and candidates from the local, state and federal level.
- A Volleyball team that was complimented on their citizenship while competing in the state tournament.
- Thirty-Eight students with a 4.0 Grade GPA
- A Football team that earned the Highest Combined GPA for Small School Football
- An Olympic themed, middle school Interdisciplinary Field Trip that focused on teamwork
- Forty-two students with Perfect Attendance
- National Honor Society inducted 5 new members.
- A Speed/Strength Training Team that showed positive support for competitors from other schools.
- A middle school 1st quarter assembly that honored students in academic, attendance and class achievements.

I am confident that we all could add even more great accomplishments that are a result of our positive school culture. Thank you for your support and trust. May your holiday season be blessed with family and friends and filled with wonderful memories.

Shane L Bostic

CALLER ID

Each day the office fields several calls from parents who see a missed call from 776-9400 and call back. There are over 50 phones in the school that will show this same number on caller ID. Remember that Administration, teachers and the nurse will leave a message if they need to reach you. If it is your student calling, please assume he/she will try again if it is important.

FOUND!!!

*LADIES WEDDING
RING. INQUIRE AT
THE OFFICE.*

PTSA

Join PTSA today!

eSrip—Support Nikiski Middle High School PTSA through eScrip. Safeway Club Card number is needed to enroll. Enroll online @ escrip.com. Search for Nikiski High School PTSA.

Contact
Michele_carver4@yahoo.com

MS. THOMPSON-COLLEGE AND CAREER

A Word about their Future

Did you know that the average bachelor's degree recipient graduates with only about \$20,000 in debt? Did you also know that, on average over a lifetime, people in the U.S. with a bachelor's degree make \$20,000 more *per year* than those without? Postsecondary education can pay for itself in the long run, and I've been working on getting the students on the paths that will work for them. There has been a Senior Parent Night, College Fair, Financial Aid Night and Career Day so far – look for a FAFSA Completion Event in January, and College Planning Night for juniors and below coming up in the spring. I have enjoyed working with all the students, and if you haven't been to an event yet, definitely give it a shot – there's always food, time for questions, and lots of great resources, including parent-specific tools so that you can help with the process. Can't make it to an event? Feel free to email or call me at your convenience, I'll get back to you quickly!

Junior and senior parents: A campus visit can inspire students and help them make up their mind. Thinking about sending your child to a school in-state? Check out the upcoming campus-based events:

UAF:

December 1: Discover UAF: Honors and UA Scholars Program

January 26 & February 9: Discover UAF: Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships

March 8: Discover UAF: Inside Out

Can't make it to an event? Schedule your own tour at www.uaf.edu/admissions/visit.

Can't make it to campus? Take the virtual tour at www.uaf.edu/virtualtour or visit them at www.collegeweeklive.com.

UAA:

February 1: UAA Preview Day

Can't make it to an event? Schedule a tour at www.uaa.alaska.edu/futurestudents.

Can't make it to campus? Take the virtual tour at www.uaa.alaska.edu/futurestudents/campus_tour.cfm.

UAS:

Book a campus tour or take their virtual tour at www.uas.alaska.edu/tours.

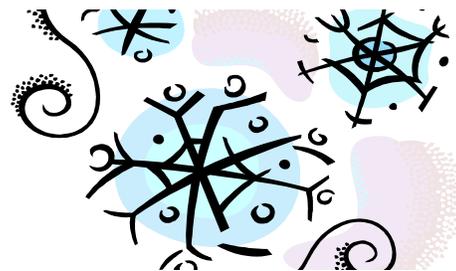
See you soon!

Tasha Thompson

College & Career Guide

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

ttompson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us | 776-9407



MR. HOOPER - ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Nikiski Wrestling team would like to thank all of the people and businesses for their help in hosting one of the largest wrestling tournaments in the state, the Peninsula Duals. We had 20 teams in attendance this year and wrestled 44 dual meets during the tournament. It was a spectacular event. I apologize if I leave anyone out of my thank you's, the list of people that helped is long and you are all appreciated.

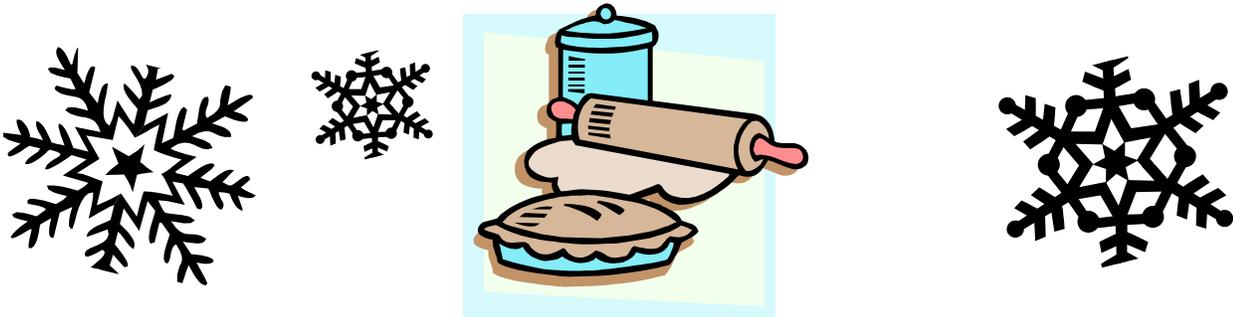
Thank you for all of your help:

Cy and Maria Cox, Troy and Linda Zimmerman, Todd and Jolynne Sauve, Darrell and Teri Langston, Tim and Charlene Johnson, Dan and Deb Carstens, Gary and Cathy Parker, Chris Parker, Michael Stangel, Brittany Sexton, Bella Fiore, Jared Parnell, Kristin Peek, Cari Ward, Laura Niemczyk, Terry Durrant, Wayne Carroll, Seth Carstens, Ben Carstens, Patrick Sterling, Anna Widman, Kara Bethune, Karla Smith, Glynes Gerrior, Jan Kornstad, Karen Olsen, Carol McCormick, Kelly Crouse, Nikiski Church of Christ, Three Bears, Uptown Motel, M and M Market, Safeway, and Charlie's Pizza.

MRS. JOHANSEN-FOODS

Homemade quick bread, pancakes, waffles, crepes, puddings, mac-n-cheese these are some of the things **FOODS CLASS** has been cookin' up over the last couple weeks. We will be starting on pastry and pies this week. "Student demos" are also starting this week. I'll be sending home a letter with details on a Thanksgiving homework assignment, parents be watching for this important information. I enjoyed visiting with those parents who attended Parent/Teacher conferences. If you were unable to attend and would like to meet with me just call and we'll set up a time.

Encourage your kids to get into the kitchen and help make a meal! ~ Marilee Johansen



MR. ANDERSON-BAND/CHOIR

Winter Concert-

Join us for our first concert of the year! The band and choir will be performing a wonderful selection of holiday music on Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 PM. It's going to be a great show. You won't want to miss it!

Students should dress nice. Slacks and collared shirts please for the boys. Girls can wear nice slacks, dresses or skirts. No Jeans or t-shirts. Christmas colors are encouraged but not necessary. Please remember school dress code rules apply to concerts as well.

Choir-

The choir is working hard to raise support to take a music tour in Hawaii this year! You can help the students raise their support by coming to the Lasagna Dinner before the concert on December 11th. So come have dinner at 5:30 PM, take part in a silent auction/bake sale while supporting the choir! The concert will be following the dinner at 7:00 PM. You can buy your tickets from any High School Choir student or get your tickets at the door. \$5.00 person, \$3.00 per child (10 and younger) or \$10.00 for a family of 5. See you there!

I am looking for anyone who might like to volunteer to play piano a couple hours a week for my choir classes. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please email Mr. Anderson at janderson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Pep Band-

Membership is open to all current and past students, faculty, alumni or anyone in the community that has been in band and wants to cheer on the school! We welcome individuals of all skill levels, and no audition is required. If you are interested in becoming a member, please send an email to janderson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us with the following information:

- Name
- Contact Information
- Year in School (if applicable)
- Instruments you play and which you would prefer to play in the band
- Any other questions you may have.

We will have one or two practices together, starting in late November, and you can come to any of the basketball games you choose throughout the season! No Pressure!!

NURSE GLYNES



A Note from the Nurse:

Have you noticed the news lately? Have you heard that eating breakfast is “in” again? I am wondering how many Nikiski Middle/High School students are taking the time to “break” their “fast” each morning, and to eat well throughout the day...I am guessing the answer is NOT ENOUGH!

Did you know that something as simple as eating breakfast can improve your student’s test scores? Foods such as whole grains, beans, fresh fruits and starchy vegetables can provide a steady source of energy to the brain, and that is just what the brain needs in order to function optimally. Simple carbohydrates (think cookies, cakes made with white flour, doughnuts, pop tarts, etc.) create blood sugar levels that are not stable, and thus affect brain function, mood, and more. If you don’t refuel your body in the morning, you will have to draw fuel from your own energy stores. When using reserves, your body tries to save as much energy as possible and all nonessential functions receive little fuel. So creative thinking, memory, attention span all suffer.

According to Mary Angela Miller, registered dietician at Ohio State University in Columbus, “The recommended breakfast should include fruit, fiber and protein. Use fresh fruit, preferably, or canned fruit. Cereal with high fiber, fruit and milk is a great way to renew energy supplies for the morning.” Healthy snacks are another way to improve performance. The combination of a high protein, low carbohydrate, and high tyrosine food is likely to “jump-start” the brain. Milk and yogurt have this combination. So do nuts, including soy nut; fruits; vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, peppers and cherry tomatoes; bananas and raisins; low-fat granola bars; cheese and peanut butter crackers; or even a peanut butter sandwich and water.

Finally, in order to do your very best, remember there are foods that are best avoided. Research suggests that eating foods with trans-fats, including pastries, candies and all fried foods will deteriorate cognitive function—cognitive functions are activities of the BRAIN and include analysis, comprehension, decision making, and many more. Eating a doughnut in the morning before the test may indeed give you some quick energy. However, it definitely will not help you to think clearly!



MS. BOYLE-READ 180

Wow! Time really does fly when you’re having fun. Students are progressing nicely through the READ 180 program hitting the success zone regularly. We have already finished reading two novels and will be finished with the third one before Christmas break. These are all novels students can relate to at their age. Allowing them to create something based on what they have read lends itself to a deeper understanding and connection with the story.

Whirligig by Paul Fleishman is one of my all-time favorites about a young man who makes a poor choice and the consequences of his actions, his journey both literally and in essence to find himself and to forgive. As a reflective project, students built whirligigs that represented who they are.

Freak the Mighty by Philbrick Rodman is a heart wrenching story about two boys who build a friendship around their inability to fit in. Together they feel able to do anything. Students created a Venn diagram comparing/contrasting the book and movie.

Becoming Naomi Leon by Pam Munoz Ryan is another inspiring novel about a young girl’s quest to find her identity. She uses “soap carving” to express herself as students in this class will do as a reflective project.

MRS. ZIMMERMAN-SIXTH GRADE

LANGUAGE ARTS: Students are doing extremely well in Writing Workshop! We've been working on an Elk's Club Essay that some students will submit to be judged by the Elk's in January. There will be cash prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners, so stay tuned! Students are also learning to write expository pieces as well. Our focus is on quality writing! We use the 6 traits of writing: ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions and presentation.

SOCIAL STUDIES: We continue learning about current events through our Jr. Scholastic. The election sure has given us a lot to learn and discuss. Our continent maps this quarter are Asia and Europe. I was surprised at how much knowledge the students already possessed about Asia! I am delighted to say that the map skills the 6th graders have been learning are improving steadily.

POWER SCHOOL: Parents, if you do not know your access code or are having problems with Power School, PLEASE call the front office at 776-9400 to get the necessary information you need. It is imperative that you learn how to navigate through Power School. You will be shocked with the information you can find out about your child's grades, assignments or lack of, and even how much money is on your student's lunch account. Ask your student to help you log on, they are masters with technology. Students check their grades weekly on Fridays in my class and are required to write them down in their planners so they can track their own progress. Power School is your KEY to being informed!

STUDENT of the WEEK: Mrs. Durrant and I have decided to start a Student of the Week recognition program in the 6th grade. We hope to honor those students who are showing good character and working hard. Students will get positive recognition for a job well done!

Have a very blessed holiday season with your family!

MRS. DURRANT-SIXTH GRADE

The sixth grade is a fun loving group of students who are turning into a dedicated group of hard working young adults. They are developing listening and note taking skills I have even had to make a place in my classroom for students who wanted to hand in work early.

In 6th grade Science, second quarter, the students have studied soils and erosion. They have learned about soil types and how erosion and weathering shapes our landscape. Our next unit of study will be Energy Transfer and the Water Cycle.

In 6th grade Math this quarter the students have learned to add and subtract with decimals. They are now working with multiplication and division of decimals. Right before Christmas break the students will begin work on Greatest Common Factor and Least Common Multiple.

MRS. BROWN-MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

Course2:

The course 2 students just finished up a unit on Data and Statistics and are moving into Number Patterns and Fractions. We will continue to work on Fractions through the end of the semester by completing a unit on Fraction Operations.

Course3:

The course 3 students recently started our first Differentiated Unit on Linear Functions and Relationships. They were given a list of KUD's for the unit. The 8th graders have been getting KUD's for units being covered in several of their middle school classes lately. Ask your son or daughter what KUD's are in general and what they are specifically for in the unit we are in currently. Please continue to check Power School to keep up on how your kiddo is doing in math.

Algebra II:

The Algebra 2 students in my class will be finishing the semester with a unit on quadratic equations. We will be graphing them and using several methods for solving them. We are even going to learn a little song to help us to remember the quadratic formula. Good thing we have some top notch choir students in our class.

MR. ANDERS-MIDDLE SCHOOL P.E.

There is a lot happening in Physical Education grades 6, 7 & 8. Students have recently studied fundamentals of strength/circuit training and Basketball. On Mondays we are continuing the weekly mile run and many personal records are being beaten. This month there is an emphasis on ultimate Frisbee. During December we will continue to learn about strength training. Most students are doing a good job of bringing their PE clothes and athletic shoes every day. Keep up the good work. Happy Holidays!



MR. BAILEY-QUEST & 7th SOCIAL STUDIES

Quest students are currently preparing for a FLL (FIRST LEGO League) regional qualifier tournament at the Kenai Challenger Center. FIRST is a global program, standing for “Foundation for the Inspiration of Science and Technology”. This LEGO League robotics challenge requires students to build and program a robot to attempt autonomous missions on a playing field with various LEGO models. The theme this year, called ‘Senior Solutions’, also involves students partnering with a senior citizen and working to create an innovative solution to a challenge seniors face. The students are contributing their various talents in hopes of qualifying for the state tournament in January!

Quest 7th graders are also learning about the FPS (Future Problem Solving) program and will be submitting an official practice problem for their team this quarter. The team component of FPS involves students tackling global challenges, using their problem solving and writing skills to complete and submit required components to FPS evaluators for scoring and feedback. NMHS “Mind A-Mazes” teams brought back 2 awards from the ‘Mission to Mars’ district meet in October – “Judges Choice” and “3rd place overall” for the intermediate division!

7th grade Social Studies students have continued their exploration of ancient civilizations from around the world. From the Stone Age, through Mesopotamia, and on to Ancient Egypt & Kush, the role that geography plays in these ancient civilizations history, as well as similarities and differences between the civilizations are recurring themes. Currently, students have been discovering some of the unique characteristics of ancient India, including their various religions and achievements, and will then dive into civilizations of ancient China in the coming month. Second semester brings more investigations into ancient empires and cultures, including the Greek, Roman, and American civilizations!

MR. DOTH—MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE

Middle school science has been cruisin’ forward and is ready for the next step. Eighth graders are finishing up Earth Science and ready to embark on their first ever, view on Physics. Our seventh graders are finishing up a series of labs that have introduced them to the microscopic world of cells and how they keep themselves alive each and every day. The school year is flying by as Thanksgiving approaches, can hardly wait for more to come!

MS. NIEMCZYK-LANGUAGE ARTS

7th Grade Language Arts: It was wonderful getting the chance to speak with many of you during parent teacher conferences. We are working on what is probably my favorite unit of the year. Mostly because this unit helps prepare students for high school and the real world. Expository or informational writing is critical to master this year. To that end, we are learning how to take notes, reviewing and expanding on grammar—including sentence diagramming—determining the relevance in what we read to the world around us, and getting precise with our words. Writing cohesive paragraphs and short essays provides students with the tools to analyze and organize information clearly.

The District wide Analytical Writing Assessment is December 4-6. This will serve as the 2nd quarter common writing assessment and will focus on expository or informational writing. Students should have their scored papers back in mid-January. Second quarter book reports are due Dec. 14th so please remind your student to start working on it early!

8th Grade Language Arts: Right now we are in the middle of our “Perfect World?” unit. Students are either reading *The Giver* or *Hunger Games* and working in literature circle groups to explore the idea of utopia, conformity, and the ability of language to shape or influence society. This unit has four main objectives. The first two are content related: analyze literature with a focus on themes and symbols, and compose an expository compare and contrast essay. The second two objectives are just as (if not more) important: time management and interpersonal skills. Students are responsible for completing a variety of assignments and tasks individually and in small groups by a set date. Groups determine their reading schedule, vocabulary project, journals, and Community Creation project. I am providing guidance and accountability checks but have left many of the decisions up to the individual groups. It is a great learning opportunity for the students and allows them to tackle new and challenging material/concepts using their individual learning preferences. There is more homework this quarter than last so if you are not seeing your student reading more at home, ask them about it.

Speaking of reading, reading logs seem to be the biggest stumbling block of 8th grade. They are due every Monday and students should have 5 entries per week. Second quarter book reports are due Dec. 14th so please remind your student to start working on it early!

9th Grade language Arts: So far this quarter students have read a biography, given a 5-7 minute oral presentation, compared denotation and connotation of words, read examples of definition essays, practiced defining success, and done a creative writing exercise based on the person from their biography. Needless to say, it has been a busy quarter! We are moving into small group reading where students will be reading various books all focused on overcoming obstacles. The District wide Analytical Writing Assessment is December 4-6. This will be the last time your student participates in this assessment. It will also serve as the 2nd quarter common writing assessment and will focus on expository or informational writing. Students should have their scored papers back in mid-January.

MR. BJORKMAN-MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORY

Recently in my classes we have been discovering many new and dynamic ways to work together to learn. We have been using new group work strategies that encourage the students to focus on exactly what they are supposed to be learning and then what they should accomplish as a result of that learning.

All of my Social Studies classes have been learning the States and Capitals of the United States. This has helped students understand the Electoral College process from the recent election. Also, we will be having our school wide geography bee soon. At this competition students have the opportunity to win prizes and move on to the Alaska National Geographic Geography Bee in Anchorage in the spring.

Beside geography, we have been working in my 7th and 8th grade classes to make connections from history to current events and what students are encountering in their daily lives. In 8th grade we are discussing the themes of the American Revolution and how those themes are evident in their lives today. In 7th grade World History we are learning about divisions in ancient Indian society and religions. Students should understand the connections between that culture and our own, along with the many differences that exist.

In 6th Grade AOC we have been learning about the furbearers of Alaska. The 6th graders are creating collages based on their research about the habitat and description of each animal as well as methods of trapping that animal. Outside of school, students have the opportunity to come trapping with me to experience what they are learning first hand.

I am looking forward to the coming month as we wrap up the second quarter. My students are doing a great job at learning new strategies to process information and are participating well in class with great comments and original ideas! Have a

MR. KORNSTAD, JR.-MATH

Hello Algebra fans! Mr. Kornstad, Jr. here. I am excited about the things we are doing in math this quarter. We have been developing the use of iPads in the classroom over the last few months. Our main focus so far has been to use them as a way to keep track of our learning.

There are two main methods we use to do this: The first is through an application called [evernote](#) where students can keep electronic notes inside of a notebook that is shared with me. Students often photograph their work, creating a note in evernote where the text in the photograph then becomes searchable allowing them to stay better organized.

The second method we are using to keep track of our learning is through another application called [dropbox](#). Each day when students come to class there are a few warm-up exercises on the board for them to practice and learn. As feedback becomes necessary students may use an iPad to quickly access video demonstrations of the solutions to these exercises, which I have prepared and placed on dropbox. This allows students to get the help they need when, and where they need it even if I am busy helping another student.

Each of these warm-up exercises as well as the plan for the day is available to students in several ways using evernote. The app can be downloaded for free on any computer or mobile device with Internet access, or you can simply login to your account from any computer at [evernote.com](#). We are really starting to see students beginning to take responsibility for their learning! Math at Nikiski...its awesome!!

MR. JOHNSON - INDUSTRIAL ARTS

Industrial Arts is the opportunity to work with different forms of media while learning a skill that can be applied to future career choices. Here is what we have been doing:

CAD/CAM We are excited to end the semester with great success; we used the Shop Bot, Plasma/CAM and Versa/CAM (a vinyl printer) to make great things that the school and community can use! This program has expanded significantly allowing students to demonstrate their individual creativity in wood, metal, and vinyl. We extend our great appreciation to Mike Peek who was an integral part of expanding our program this year! When you see one of our new banners cheering a Nikiski success or advertising for our local community, another 21st century skill is being demonstrated!

Occupational Technology is our exploration of vocational arts for our younger students. Our Middle School students will be working in the wood shop building cheese boards and production projects. Students learn to use tools, equipment safety, as well as leadership and collaborative roles while learning the process for each project.

Woods classes will be styling projects through joinery, woodturning, and production. These students demonstrate their creative talents and artistic flare while learning the detail behind wood-working. The students are enjoying using the new wood lathes that we have added to the shop over the last four years.

Construction Trades is in the final semester of our community project with Triumvirate Theater here in Nikiski. The stage floor is finalized with hardwood. Additionally, students have laid tile, put in the sinks, toilets, and vanity in the bathrooms. Very soon Nikiski residents will be watching performances where vocational students have had a hand in building a great part of our community!

Nikiski Middle High School has offered many opportunities to students to gain employability skills for their future and we look forward to demonstrating these skills in our community!

MS. WIDMAN-ART

The *Nikiski Middle/High School* art department has been a lively place this fall! Sixth grade classes have finished learning the basics of paint mixing by using only primary colors to create several beautiful paintings.

A new section of Middle School art students started classes in October. These classes have been experiencing color theory through chalk pastel and watercolor projects. They have also spent time learning about still life drawing and line quality. They are excited to start working with clay this week!

High School art classes spent two weeks studying music and imagery. Students found lyrics to a song or poem that they found meaningful to use as inspiration for their projects. They then chose materials and forms that they found the most useful to represent those words artistically. Classes have also been designing cities using two-point linear perspective.

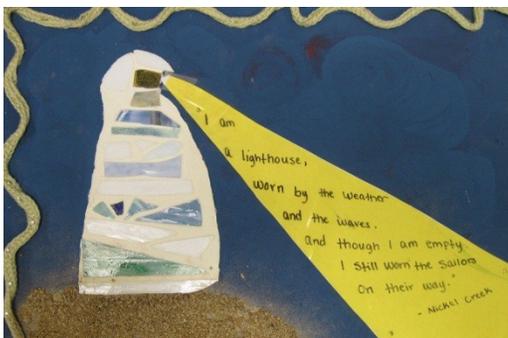
All students will be participating in an exciting service project to benefit the *Ferdinand Center for the Creative*. The center includes a school that teaches street children in the Philippines graphic design. In January Les Nelson, the center's founder, will be visiting his home town of Nikiski. The board for his center will be hosting an empty bowls event. The board is providing Nikiski students with clay and glaze to make up to 100 bowls for the event. Students from Nikiski Middle/High will create the bowls for the event. Community members will purchase student made bowls to go with a homemade meal. All proceeds will go to the center.



6th grade bowls



Jeaneelee Stock – 2 point perspective



Abbie Cason – Visualizing Music



Avery Kornstad- Line and Color

MR. ADAIR-SCIENCE

Physical Science has been exploring the subject of Chemistry this fall and will finish out the semester studying the mysterious subject of stars, galaxies and other phenomena of our incredible universe. Also on the horizon will be radiation in the electromagnetic spectrum and exploring the basic principles of electrostatics. Students will be making their own electroscopes, solving for resistance and current as well as building simple circuits online and in the classroom. Physical Science students will then explore the concepts of magnetism.

Biology has enjoyed harvesting fungal specimens around school grounds this fall and identifying their structural parts under the microscope. Students also observed osmosis in action with plant cells and hypertonic solutions. In addition to the amazing world of fungi and osmosis we have explored population growth, energy flow, ecosystem interactions and cellular structures to name a few. Upcoming for Biology students are the topics of genetics, classification of life on Earth and the incredible world of plants and other living organisms.

Chemistry students started the year with getting basic Chemistry skills under their belt such as understanding energy, matter and atomic structure. This has led us to understanding electron configurations, periodic trends, reactivity of elements, chemical bonding, polarity and molecular geometry. Students have enjoyed designing their own experiments with ionic compounds and testing electrical conductivity. Currently students are studying the different types of chemical reactions and writing their chemical equations. This will again lead us into some fun laboratory experiments.

MR. ERNST-ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

We are almost four weeks into the new school year and a lot of exciting stuff is going on out in the Red Portable:

LA 9 / Life Science: This year in the Nikiski Alternative Program we are trying a new combination class that gives students a chance to earn credit in LA 9 and Life Science simultaneously. Phil Morin, Kara Bethune and myself teach this dual credit class, and the students have performed excellently so far. Students start the day in LA 9 with me, where we work on reading and writing skills that will serve them in completing assignments and understanding terminology in Life Science as well as meeting new district requirements for 9th grade writing. This quarter we have begun working on 2 column note taking, which will serve students across the curriculum by giving them a note taking tool which can also be used to organize and plan essay writing.

LA 10: LA 10 in the Nikiski Alternative Program this year is focusing on the basics of English grammar to build the writing skills necessary for success in other classes, the filling out of applications for jobs and colleges, and---of course---meeting the requirements of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in both reading and writing. Also covered are the basics of writing mechanics including proper capitalization, punctuation, parts of speech and word usage. This quarter we have started a unit on the book Speak, which has proven to be a high-interest book about the life of a traumatized freshman who has to work through her experience to find success and happiness in school and life.

Study Skills: I teach two sections of Study Skills and things are going along nicely! Students in these classes learn how to study for and complete work in their other classes and develop strategies to keep up with all their assignments. It is always great to see students discover that they have the skills and ability to succeed in school, and this year has started out very strong! I am proud of each of my students!

MR. ANDERSON

Winter Concert-

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I am looking for anyone who might like to volunteer to play piano a couple hours a week for my choir classes. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please email Mr. Anderson at janderson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Pep Band-

Membership is open to all current and past students, faculty, alumni or anyone in the community that has been in band and wants to cheer on the school! We welcome individuals of all skill levels, and no audition is required. If you are interested in becoming a member, please send an email to janderson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us with the following information:

- Name
- Contact Information
- Year in School (if applicable)
- Instruments you play and which you would prefer to play in the band

Any other questions you may have.



We will have one or two practices together, starting in late November, and you can come to any of the basketball games you choose throughout the season! No Pressure!!

MR. BROWN-STUDY SKILLS

We have had a great 1st quarter of work. My 4th and 7th hours have really put in some serious effort to keep themselves organized. PowerSchool has proven to be a tool that truly informs not only the student of their grades, but allows teachers, parents and coaches to assist students in keeping on top of their studies.

Students that are in athletics utilize PowerSchool on a daily basis to keep up on their studies on athletic road trips. Most of today's students have internet on their cell phones. This allows my study skills kids that are in sports to access their grades, all the while keeping focused on their team goals. Several of my wrestler's that are also in my study skills class are required to use Power School each day.

As we approach the holidays, it is even more crucial that students keep organized and focused on their studies. For several Nikiski High School students, study skills is an important link in attaining their diploma.

MR. THOMPSON—MATH

Best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season! The following is just a short synopsis of what is being covered at present in the math classes which I teach here at Nikiski High School.

HSGQE MATH: As stated in a previous newsletter, HSGQE MATH is being offered to help students improve the math skills in which they are deficient in order to pass the mathematics section of the Alaska 'High School Graduation Qualifying Exam'. So far, we have focused on two major strands of the 'High School Graduation Qualifying Exam': Numeration, and Estimation and Computation. We are just finishing up a unit on fractions from a concept standpoint as well as from a computational standpoint. We will follow this up with an integrated unit on Measurement. We will do some hands on measurement in both metric and customary units, as well as convert measurements in both systems. We will also memorize a list of the basic conversion factors, such as feet in a mile, pints in a gallon, ounces in pound, weeks in a year, etc.

Geometry: The Geometry class is finishing a unit on parallel and perpendicular lines, with emphasis on identifying and classifying congruent angles when a transversal cuts two or more parallel lines. This will be followed by a unit on triangle congruence. Triangle congruence details various ways to prove that two triangles are congruent to each other given minimum information. The unit starts with a basic review of triangle properties and classifications. Students have learned to classify triangles by angles; such as acute, right or obtuse; and by sides; such as scalene, isosceles, and equilateral. Students will learn ways to decide whether two given triangles are congruent using the acronyms SSS, SAS, ASA, and SAA. This unit will also teach them more about organizing and executing a proof.

Math Analysis: As the title of this class would suggest, Math Analysis is a class where functions are analyzed. We start with some basic linear functions and progress to higher polynomial functions and trigonometric functions. A typical analysis of a function will include the following information. It will give the domain and range of the function; tell if the function is continuous; tell where the function increases and decreases; tell if the function is symmetrical in any way; tell if it is bounded above or below at a certain value; tell if it has any local minimums or maximums; tell if there are any vertical or horizontal asymptotes; and give the end behavior of the function as input values approach negative infinity and positive infinity. Along with this analysis, we investigate practical application and modeling of the function in today's world.

AP Calculus: The calculus class is in the middle of the study of derivatives. Derivatives are used to find the 'instantaneous rate of change' of a function at any given point of the function. The study of rates of change is called 'differential calculus', and is a main focus of the class. The derivative was the mathematical breakthrough that enabled us to unlock the secrets of planetary motion and gravitational attraction-of objects changing position over time. There are basic rules for finding the derivative of a function. The class is presently memorizing these rules and learning how to apply them to various functions. This generally tests even the best student's algebra and variable manipulation skills.

As always, please stay involved in your child's education. If you feel they are slipping, have them come in and get extra help. I am generally at school and willing to help students from 7:00 am till the start of school, and after school as well. If you have questions or information for me that is important in the education of your son or daughter, please contact me. The easiest way to contact me and for me to reply is through email. Also, please monitor your child's progress in my class via PowerSchool. My email address is btompson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us.

MR. RIDDAL-PE

The Nikiski Physical Education program is alive and well. The weight classes competed in the SST contest on October 17th at Kenai High School. Nikiski won the traveling trophy and had the most individual champions during the competition. Over eighty kids from Kenai, Skyview, and Nikiski competed. Nikiski will host the lifting part of the SST program in March.

The Basic Physical Education classes are working on fitness components to the SST program and enjoying indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball, and Kin Ball. Fitness testing will happen before Thanksgiving Break.

Currently, Nikiski is collaborating through the SST program with Skyview and Kenai. Kids are competing throughout various parts of the program and live polycom is allowing the students to view their opponents while they compete. The goal to be healthier and to benefit from lifelong fitness activities is being mastered daily in our awesome program. GO DAWGS!!!!!!

MR. ZIMMERMAN-SPANISH

As we push towards the halfway mark of 2nd quarter I try to remind students about the fact that their 1st semester grade is just around the corner. Sometimes students forget that their 1st and 2nd quarter grades will be averaged to attain their 1st semester grades. It is helpful to remind students to revisit their academic goals during this time of the school year while they still have time to influence the outcome.

All of my history and Spanish classes will be involved in a 2nd quarter project in the very near future. While we are working on a larger project you will notice that the amount of homework and in class assignments will be reduced. Therefore, it is even more important for students to turn in a quality project to help them achieve their academic goals. So take some time to ask your child, "How is the project coming along?"

MRS. JENNESS— INTEGRATED HONORS PROGRAM

The yearbook is looking great! Your yearbook staff has been working hard to include all the great memories students at Nikiski Middle/High are creating this year. There is a neat new feature that our yearbook company has instituted this year. If you or your student goes to Replayit.com, you can make a confidential account that enables you to see lots of photos that will be in the book as well as upload your own photos for inclusion in this year's Silver Scribe yearbook. It's a great program that works easily. You can even upload photos from your Smartphone after downloading the free Replayit App.

Senior parents, it's time to think about buying a baby ad to congratulate your hardworking senior for a job well done. Prices are \$75 for a ¼ page ad, \$125 for a ½ page ad, and \$175 for a full page of adorable photos and a heartfelt message to your special senior. Contact me at cjenness@kpbsd.k12.ak.us to reserve your space in the book. Space is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. All baby ads must be submitted before Christmas, so act now!

Yearbooks are on sale at Jostens.com or in the office for \$55. The price will go up after Thanksgiving, so hurry and take advantage of this price while you still can.

MR. MORIN-BIOLOGY

The year has been very busy. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this school year is getting to mentor Kara Bethune for her teacher's internship as a student teacher. Kara is a 2007 graduate of Nikiski Middle/Senior High. She received her Bachelor in Science as a Zoology major.

Kara's internship has been going well and she has assumed instructional responsibility for one class and is soon to take on 4 more. We have been working co-operatively and her progress is most impressive. Kara has already demonstrated A high degree of professionalism and excellent teaching skills. All the students have benefited from getting to work with such a gifted teacher.

We are piloting the use of iPads in the classroom this year. Students have had the opportunity to use the iPads to introduce concepts, enhance and re-enforce learning goals and create products. We have discovered several areas iPads contribute to efficacy and are learning more as the semester progresses. The students' feedback has been positive and we are encouraged that this new technology will benefit the education of our students.

The District has decided to offer Biology as a freshman course. This makes an already challenging course even more challenging. The material is difficult for many reasons and having at least one year of high school experience benefited students. The result is we are teaching learning skills more explicitly in Biology. And though we give students learning tools to use, we also explain if they don't use the tool, they won't succeed in class. I would like to encourage all parents of my students to provide study time at home.

MR. EVELAND-MATH INTERVENTION

Hello Parents and Students,

This month my Explorations students were a very busy bunch. After spending countless hours designing and building various toothpick bridges, we tested their breaking strength in a messy, explosion of toothpicks and glue. Smiles were had by all.

I am also very proud of the progress all my Math Fundamental students are showing. I would especially like to express how pleased I am with my 7th hour class as a group. Their behavior, hard work, and determination definitely represent everything that's great with our school. WAY TO GO GUYS!!!



MRS. THOMPSON-SPECIAL NEEDS

Tis the Season!!! We are gearing up for our Holiday crafts and our Holiday fun!!!

Here is just one of our crafts that we are doing. Our class is pretty talented!!!

We will also be doing some great cooking activities. We are so excited to get our Holiday classroom activities under way!!! Hope the holiday Season finds everyone Healthy and happy!!!

Happy Holiday!!!

Mrs. Thompson



MR. JACKSON-SPED

Students *need* to be an integral part of their own education. I also realized it was not education I was after, but individual learning. People need to be an integral part of their own learning experiences. I decided, with other teachers here at Nikiski Middle High School, to begin the arduous and even tedious task of turning a big ship around; that ship being one of student's mentalities on school, learning and education.

As I am teaching three different classes of Math Fundamental's I choose to make it a more learner centered and learner driven class. There are some things upon first setting foot in these classes that may not seem normal by some archaic benchmarks of education. Some things you will not see are textbooks at every desk, a teacher lecturing to the entire class, or students working on assignment simultaneously.

There are some key components that have been well explained to students in order for the procedures to run as smoothly as possible. All of these revolve around learning goal that are individual according to each student's lowest achieving areas on last springs Standards Based Assessment score and the recent Edperformance score. With these learning goals posted for each student to access and choose what area they will work on, they are given time to work on each area, be it geometry, algebra, time or measurement to name a few.

There are a number of different opportunities to learn, review, practice and demonstrate mastery of any given subject. One of them is through the use of a website called khanacademy.org, where the banner states, "Learn almost anything for free". Math definitely falls in the anything category, and founder Sal Khan has done an excellent job putting this sit together and expanding to cover multiple content areas and concepts. Math concepts can be practiced with feedback until it has been mastered. If the student feels like they are not progressing, there is an option to watch a short instructional video specifically for the concept that is being worked on. Students are met face-to-face with the question of if they are going to engage and learn the material or not.

Another site that has just recently been implemented in my 6th grade math fundamentals is IXL.com (it is a play on letters...I excel) Similar to khan academy, this site offers real clear and instant feedback on how a student is doing. When an answer is correct, there are thumb-up, awesome, great and right-on's thrown out. If the answer is incorrect, there is a brief yet concise explanation as to how the correct answer is derived.

Another seemingly simple, yet hard to face assignment that is given weekly in each of these classes is a self-reflection piece. Students are asked to answer the following three questions, followed by a brief yet often in-depth one on one conference with me. The questions are:

1. What is the concept I'm learning in math?
2. What do I totally understand within that concept?
3. What is it that is keeping me from demonstrating mastery in that concept?

These questions, while short, really force each student to recognize the learning that has occurred and gives a chance to explicitly proclaim what it is they know about a concept. The opposite though, and by far the harder task, is describing where or why they are having difficulty in mastering a concept.

I recognize that students are each at a different level of learning and are often in need of support in their learning experience. What I am attempting to do is to give each of my students the tools for success no matter where they are, what they are learning and that age is not an issue. It is important to be a lifelong learner. Let's learn.

"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going."

— [Beverly Sills](#)

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
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<http://nikiskimiddlehighschool.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/wpmu/>

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

November 26	HS Basketball Begins
Nov.30-Dec. 1	Wrestling Regions @ Grace
December 4	MS Basketball Boroughs @ Nikiski
December 7	HS XC Skiing @ Lynx Invite
December 7 & 8	State Wrestling @ Nikiski
December 11	Choir Concert—7:00 p.m. Site Council Mtg. @ 4:00
December 13—15	Girls Basketball Tourney @ Kenai Boys Basketball Tourney @ SoHi
December 13	PTSA Meeting in Library @ 6:00
December 14	HS XC Skiing @ Homer
December 18	Boys Basketball vs. Kenai
December 20	HS XC Skiing @ Skyview Snowcoming Dance
December 21	In-service for Teachers No School for Students
Dec. 21—Jan. 6	Christmas Break

IMPORTANT DATES FOR SENIORS:

- Nov. 26—Grad/After Grad planning mtg in the Library @ 6:00 p.m.
- Jan. 1—Apply for FAFSA
- March 8 –Bulldog Packet Due
- March 27—Job Fair
- March 14—Awards Night @ 7:00 p.m.
- March 20—Graduation @ 7:00 p.m.
- June 30—FAFSA Deadline for APS/Alaska Advantage Education Grant candidates.



