



# Palmer Public School



Dr. Joel Bohlken, Superintendent  
Sherise Loeffelbein, PK-6 Principal  
Greg Morris, 7-12 Principal  
Rob Wegner, Activities Director

PO Box 248, Palmer, Nebraska 68864  
Phone 308-894-3065

**Board of Education**  
Kathy Wolfe, President  
Todd Weller, Vice President  
Ashley Wissing, Secretary  
Jennifer Kunze, Treasurer  
Brian Friedrichsen  
Daniel Hake

## **Superintendent's Newsletter, February/March 2017**

One of the district goals discussed in a strategic planning session with the school board was to assess the value of an after school program. According to the Nebraska Department of Education, "There are many reasons to provide after school programs. After school programs support students' academic achievement, promote positive behaviors, support working families, and impact the quality of the community."

Palmer Public School already offers some after school opportunities through the High Ability Learner (HAL) program and the 4-H organization. These are great programs that support and expand students' learning opportunities. The question is, "Is there a need in Palmer to take the concept of the HAL and 4-H programs and expand them to reach more students for more days?" Again from NDE, "After school programs should be an opportunity to enhance learning in fun and engaging ways that are not typically offered during the school day. After school programs should not be considered 'more school'."

Research has shown that high quality afterschool settings make a significant difference in outcomes such as social skills, motivation, and academic performance. In addition, considering the number of households with both parents working outside the home, the lack of safe and enriching activities for students in at-risk situations, the dangerous or unhealthy activities that unsupervised youth might engage in, and the commitment to improve the academic performance of at-risk students, schools and communities may find safe and healthy out-of-school experiences to be beneficial.

As we research the need and feasibility of starting an after school program, some of the questions we will need to address are:

- How will you integrate the program into the school's vision and mission?
- What are the anticipated program goals and objectives?
- Who will the program serve?
- What will the program charge?
- How will the program be structured?
- Where will the program be housed?
- How will the program be staffed and funded?

Starting an after school program is by no means decided. At this time, we are looking into whether or not there is a need for our families and, if so, what resources would be necessary to implement an effective after school program. I would welcome your input. Please email your comments to: [jbohlken@palmer.esu7.org](mailto:jbohlken@palmer.esu7.org).

Sincerely,

Dr. Bohlken



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We are now halfway through the school year and from my seat, it's been a super first half!! The students have been excellent. We have had very few discipline problems and they continue to display that if you have a "smile on your face" that school can be a pleasant experience. The football team gave the community a great ride by making it to the NSAA final four. The volleyball team displayed a super amount of spunk and we look for bigger achievements in the future. The students have been in charge of select "house days" and have provided excellent learning experiences for all. I have no doubts that our students will excel in the second half of the school year just like they have so far.

Our faculty has been providing "out of the box" learning experiences on a daily basis. Just the other day, I witnessed four teachers, in a time span of 30 minutes, having students learning in a different manner than when I was educated oh so many years ago. Our philosophy at PHS is to excite the students into learning and then providing learning experiences where every student will be engaged. I've been so excited with our faculty in providing an exciting learning environment.

I want to thank the community for the support of our school system. I was told before I arrived by a childhood friend that this was a special community and oh was he right. The attendance to school activities has been excellent and when I've talked with parents of our students, it's obvious that they have a lot of respect for the school system. Without community support, our students would be handicapped in the preparation for their future.

We have an excellent student body, first-rate teachers who are constantly looking to engage those students, and an extremely supportive community. Add it all up and you have an excellent school system. A big thank you to everyone involved in making PHS such a special place!!

To All in Tiger Nation  
Greg Morris  
7-12 Principal/Curriculum Coordinator



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Through the end of quarter two and the start of quarter three we have had an influx of sickness going throughout the students and staff. Our janitors and staff have been very busy trying to sterilize all areas of the building. Some tips to assist in keeping your children free from sickness that you can practice at home are:

- Avoid sharing food and drinks at home.
- Make your child wash their hands with warm water and sing the alphabet while they do it so they make sure to wash long enough!
- Remind them to keep their fingers out of their mouth or do not touch their face for easy germ access!
- Students need plenty of sleep to keep their immune system up; 10-11 hours is optimal.
- Make sure they are exercising and if they go outside to play that they are wearing their hats, mittens and their jacket is zipped up.
- Eating healthy and balanced meals/snacks.
- To avoid sharing their virus they need to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Important elementary dates to remember are:

- Parent teacher conferences from 4:00-8:00 on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!
  - Elementary wrestling meet February 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - End of quarter 3 is March 9<sup>th</sup>. Get those AR points done before then!
  - MAP testing will begin the week of March 13<sup>th</sup> for students in grades 3-11.
- Stay warm and hopefully you miss out on all the germs!

Sherise Loeffelbein  
PK-6 Principal  
PK-12 Special Education Director

# SpEd

## What I Have Learned About Teaching By Kim Bader

I have learned so much about teaching by becoming a parent. Before I had children of my own, I couldn't understand why reading 20 minutes each evening was hard. Now I get it! "Do you have math? Do you have an AR book? What other homework do you have tonight? Do you need to study spelling?" Questions we ask each child every evening.

Experts give this advice about helping children with homework:

1. Talk to your child's teacher - Teachers handle homework in many different ways, and their strategies will determine how involved you should be in the work.
2. Let your child know you're interested in the work - Ask questions: "Do you understand the assignment?" "Have you done this kind of work before?" When your child is finished, ask to see the work.
3. Help in other ways - If your child works best with visual aids, draw pictures that refer back to the work. If your child works well with tactile aids, use things around the house to demonstrate math problems.
4. Organize your child's homework routine - Set up a comfortable [work space](#) at home. Schedule a time for homework every afternoon or night (try out different times to see what works best for your child). Put together a homework calendar for your child with specific assignments and due dates.
5. Praise good efforts - This form of homework help is always appropriate and will do wonders for your child's self-esteem. Display samples of well-done assignments on the refrigerator or in your child's room.

I have decided that helping my kids with homework is a little like hiking with them; they get tired and want to be carried. I don't carry them. But instead, I encourage them to do their best.



## **What do you know about Title 1?**

**What is Title 1?** Title 1 is a program that helps students who are struggling academically to perform to the best of their ability. Title 1 targets reading and math performance; however, we also work on other curricular areas if they relate to reading or math. (Sometimes we read out of a science or social studies book to work on reading comprehension.)

**How do students qualify for Title 1?** Since Palmer is a small, tight-knit school, teachers are usually able to identify students who struggle through their classroom performance. Also, we keep a close eye on all of our students through persistent standardized testing. In addition, since we are considered a schoolwide Title 1 program, on a daily basis I am able to select the students who seem to be struggling the most and assist their learning.

**What if my kid struggles during the year?** I meet with all classroom teachers multiple times each month. During these meetings we talk about students who may be struggling now that weren't previously. If we see a need, the student will receive assistance through the Title 1 program.

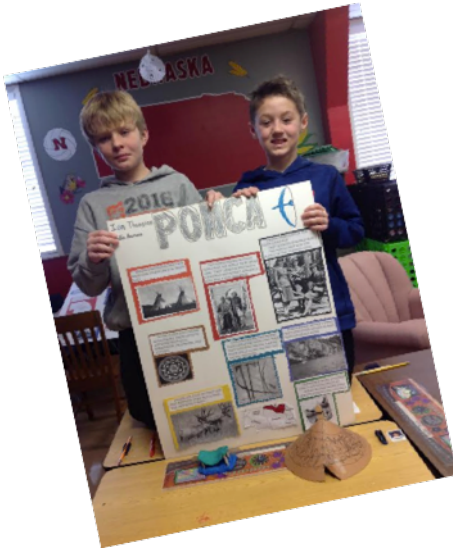
**What if my student starts doing better and no longer needs assistance?** Great! We will make sure everything is in line and fill out the paperwork to get them back in the regular classroom.

**What do I do if I have more questions?** Contact Danielle Killinger at the school, and I will be very happy to answer any questions you may have.

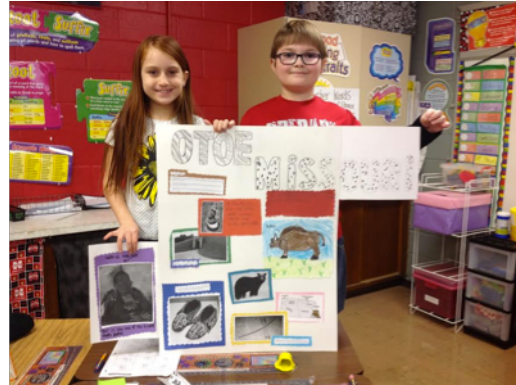


## Mrs. Thompson's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Class

In 4<sup>th</sup> Grade the students just completed a chapter on the Native Americans of Nebraska for Nebraska History! To deepen our own knowledge and to educate others on the Nebraska tribes, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class completed an informative poster on their assigned tribe and built a model of what their tribe lived in. They did an excellent job and took pride in what they did!



The Ponca tribe served in World War I. – Gatlin & Ian



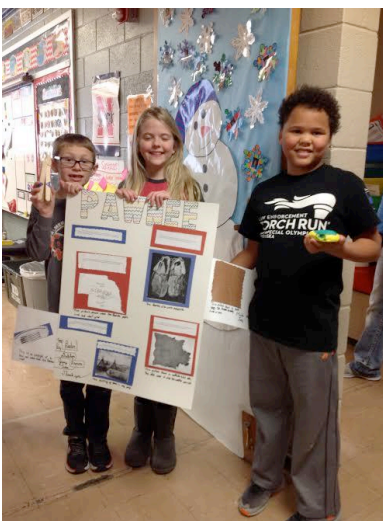
The Otoe Missouri Tribe did very crafty wood-carvings. – Raylyn & Mason



Cheyenne means "Little Cree" – Grace & Taylor



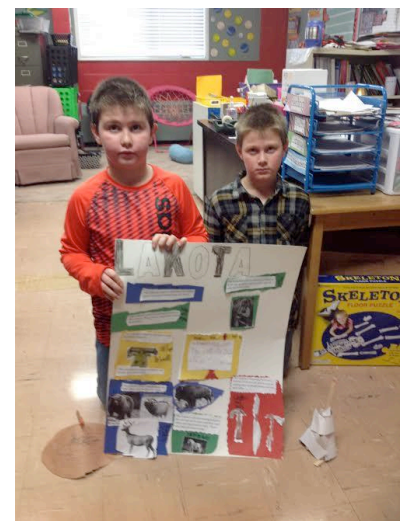
Black Bear was the chief of the Arapaho. – Tyler & Gus



The Pawnee men belonged to a group; (the groups) warrior, hunter, or medicine group. – Joey, Gretchen & Levi



Susan LaFlasche Picotte, a famous Omaha Native American, became a physician in the USA. – Makenna & Ashlyn



The Lakota move around a lot because of hunting. – Parker & Emmerson

5<sup>th</sup>

Hard to believe we are already into the second semester. Someone told me each year gets faster and faster and with this being my fourth year, I'm starting to believe that.

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I have a great group of students this year. We have a lot of fun joking around with each other while learning a variety of things on a variety of topics. Fifth grade can be a fun year because they get to participate in band for the first time, technology is offered once a week, and of course, they get me as a teacher! Ha ha!

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We are in our third year of Saxon Math and each year the kids seem to impress me more and more. Mrs. Samuelson comes over and teaches social studies and science every morning, and I think the class enjoys that hour a lot!

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The two biggest adjustments are the already mentioned (previous newsletters) Reading Street and the amount of writing we are doing. It is hard to see the early effects of the new reading series, but one test we have done so far is a baseline test. We assigned this test to every student in August. We reassigned the exact same test in January to see if there was any improvement. Every one of the students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade improved on their score for this test.

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The other change is the amount of writing we are doing. I attended a seminar where they gave us examples of writings and their scores. Some of the lowest scores were better than ours. I took these to the classroom and showed my class. I asked them how their writing was compared to them and they all agreed that their writing was not as good as the one on the board. When I told them the score, I saw their eyes light up and they have been working hard ever since. One student said she knew she had to improve on her writing, but she didn't know she had to improve THAT much. Another example is while writing during a non-writing class I asked a student where her introduction was. She looked at me and said, "We have to do that all the time?" They are starting to understand that we expect this type of writing ALL of the time and that it will be beneficial for them in the future. That is nice to see!!!

- Brandon Rolf



I'd like to thank everyone in Palmer and the surrounding communities for making me feel so welcome. The students, teachers and administration have all been very helpful and it has been a pleasure to work at Palmer. I have also enjoyed working with the girls' basketball team. Although their record doesn't really show the strides they have taken yet, I can see the girls improvement every day at practice and I know that they will accomplish great things in the future.

In Earth Science class we have covered various topics ranging from the Earth's Structure to Plate Tectonics. The students have enhanced their learning by making scale models out of clay, putting together Google slides presentations of different faults, and applying what they have learned with virtual labs.

In Physical Science we have worked with topics ranging from Newton's Laws to Electricity. The students have enjoyed many hands-on activities such as making balloon cars to demonstrate Newton's Law, making flashlights to demonstrate their knowledge of electricity, and making an electromagnet to enhance their understanding of magnets.

In Mathematics classes the students have worked on enhancing their basic mathematics skills to move advanced topics such as direction variation and functions. They have applied slope to the roof of a house, direct variation to oil spills, used scale and area in making their dream house plans and have investigated probability and the various applications.

I have really enjoyed working with all the students at Palmer School and it has been a great experience because of their polite manners and their willingness to learn.

Ms. Amy Scheil



## *Mrs. Green World*

I cannot believe that school is more than halfway over. In 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English, we are busy reading some interesting core novels, and focusing on our school improvement goal of writing. We have been using Write Tools to expand and learn how to become better writers. Many of our assignments focus around writing prompts that relate back to our text. This way we can focus on close reading, examining the text, and practice our writing process. The students were thrown right back into writing on the first day back from Christmas Break. I was not the favorite teacher that week. ☺

Speech kids have learned how to give three different types of speeches, practice interviewing skill, worked in groups, and received many lessons on avoiding plagiarism. Communication is one of my biggest passions, and I love to see the growth and confidence that flourish in this class.

The yearbook is underway and is for sale. Parents and guardians were sent letters from Jostens on how to order online, or you can contact the school or Mrs. Green to order. The yearbook is important to the history and documentation of our school, and the more sales will help insure that they can continue to be made for generations to look back on and admire.



One-Act Season has come and gone. I had twenty-one students out, and I was extremely proud of all the progress the students made throughout the year. Although we didn't place where I thought we deserved sometimes, the improvement from the beginning of the year until Districts was profound. I am excited that in four years that I have taught at Palmer, the One-Act has went from seven students to twenty-one. Having new students step out of their comfort zone and try something new makes my heart happy. We appreciate any support the community gives to the Drama department.



Speech season is underway, and the numbers are rising there as well. I have always only ever had two students at a time, and this year we are looking at six entries. Speech is a very individualized activity, and the student has to take very big leaps and strides on their own to make it a worthwhile experience. I am excited to see how my two returning seniors fair this year. We might be seeing some state Speech qualifiers. That is my goal for the year. Our meets are January 28<sup>th</sup> in Osceola, February 10<sup>th</sup> in Lindsay, February 11<sup>th</sup> in Burwell, February 22<sup>nd</sup> in Cedar Rapids, and March 16<sup>th</sup> in Humphrey.

Dear Parents and Supporters of Palmer High School,

The Palmer High School parents have begun plans for this year's after Prom Party. The post prom party is for the Freshman through Senior classes of Palmer High and their dates. This special night provides a **safe, alcohol-free, drug-free and fun** environment for our students to spend the night after prom with friends.

We are reaching out to you with **the hopes that you will be able to support us in this endeavor.**

Your donation would help to provide entertainment, games, prizes and food for all students present. We as a community, have an obligation to provide a safe and wholesome atmosphere for our children and young adults. Communities across the nation have successfully presented exciting and safe parties for high school students to attend following their proms. Palmer High School has joined the movement to provide a sensible and enjoyable alcohol and drug free alternative celebration following prom. This is an ambitious project, but the statistics relating to teen alcohol related deaths and deaths in our community underscore the importance of this endeavor. Our After Prom Party will begin at 12:30 a.m. and concludes at 3:30 a.m. We would like to end with a nice breakfast for the kids.

Any contribution of money, food, or gift certificates would be greatly appreciated. We are grateful for any monetary donation, and we have included a form to be completed and returned by February 15, 2017. We thank you for your dedication and generosity to PHS.

Sincerely,  
The 2017 After Prom Committee

Chris Wichmann 308-730-0120	Niki Bader
Traci Reimers	Eudora Weller
Jen Kunze	Kristin Reimers

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to be a sponsor of the 2017 Palmer High School After Prom Party. I have checked the level of sponsorship and enclosed a check made payable to CFAPP. (Chemical Free After Prom Party)

\_\_\_\_\_ Gold Donor \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ Silver Donor \$250 – 499

\_\_\_\_\_ Bronze Donor \$100-249

\_\_\_\_\_ Friend of PHS Donor \$25-99

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Forms may be returned via mail to:

Palmer High School CFAPP  
PO Box 248  
Palmer, NE 68864

Or you may contact: Chris Wichmann 308-730-0120 or wichmannc@hamilton.net