



Palmer Public School



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

202 Commercial Street
Palmer, Nebraska 68864
Phone 308-894-3065

Board of Education
Kathy Wolfe, President
Todd Weller, Vice President
Ashley Wissing, Secretary
Brian Friedrichsen, Treasurer
Heather Shotkoski
Daniel Hake

Superintendent's Newsletter, October/November 2019

Thursday, November 14th is the annual Endowment Fund Pancake and Play fundraiser. The One-Act Play will perform and items will be auctioned and raffled. This is the major fundraiser for the Endowment Fund, so if you'd like to donate money or items to auction, please contact the school. We are also looking for a hog donation for the meal. Over the last year, the Endowment Fund has supported students with a total of \$10,800 for the following purchases:

- \$5,171 for extracurricular activities: XC flag poles, Quiz Bowl competitions and buzzer system, National FFA trip, NHS and Drama supplies, and a piccolo.
- \$2,250 for technology: Apple TVs, IXL and HUDL web-based subscriptions.
- \$1,500 to improve facilities: Library cabinets.
- \$1,879 to supplement classroom instruction: Summer Reading, Spanish fieldtrip, Intervention materials.

See you on November 14. Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

I'd like to remind parents and students about the service requirement. All 9th – 12th grade students are required to complete 10 hours of service each year. Service hours must be pre-approved by an administrator, and can NOT be for a family member, for any pay, for the NHS individual service project, or done during the school day. However, Palmer Public School's service requirement includes something unique - service hours may be earned by participating in school activities.

Successfully completing these school activities will count for the following number of service hours:

- 5.0 hours of community service for Basketball, Wrestling.
- 3.5 hours of community service for Volleyball, Football, Cross Country, Softball, Cheer, Track.
- 2.0 hours of community service for Dance, Student Council, One-Act, NHS, FFA, All-School, Speech, Band.
- 0.5 hours of community service for Quiz Bowl, Choir, STRIV, Yearbook.

A reminder that scheduled activities sometimes get changed, so check our website www.palmer.tigers.org for the most up to date calendar of activities, or "Palmer Public Schools" on Facebook for any changes. Also, check out the website throughout the year for pictures of students being honored as a "Leader of the Pack."

Sincerely,

Dr. Bohlken

A Community that prides itself on Commitment, Growth, & Achievement!



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Greetings!

Thank you to all the parents who were able to make it to parent teacher conferences! The teacher-parent communication and teamwork are an excellent way to support your child. In case you missed it, there was a sign to get involved with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Leah Brown is currently heading that up. Her phone number is 308-940-1188. She can also be reached via email at valerieleahbrown@gmail.com. Thanks to the PTO for providing food for teachers for conferences!

In 2018, the legislature passed the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, which is designed to address student reading needs in grades K-3. The law requires that all students in grades K-3 are screened three times during the year in an effort to identify potential areas of struggle and determine supplemental instruction and intervention. The screening results determine areas of need. These areas of need are what we will focus on to help our students progress. This is not a new process for Palmer, as we were already doing this! Our instruction, as well as the instruction throughout the state, focusses on the foundational skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and reading comprehension at K-3.

November 11th is Veterans day. Our school will have a program to honor our Veterans. If you have a family member who has served please bring in a picture of them that we can add to our slide show. The start time for the program will be 9:00 a.m. so mark it on your calendar!

Sincerely,

Sherise Loeffelbein
Pk-6 Principal
Special Education Director



We're off to a great start with the 2019-20 school year. We have 130 students in grades 7-12 this school year. We have approximately 10 new students and 2 new teachers on the secondary side of the building. Our first day of school starting off with the new students using a sling-shot to knock over soda bottles to find out which house they were assigned to during our house event. Then the secondary students attended shortened periods where they received their textbooks, etc. We finished them off with lunch time and sent them home at 1:00 pm with a full day of school starting the next day.

The 9th graders will be attending the "Respect Retreat" on November 19th with the 7th graders attending the "Courage Retreat" the following day on November 20th. Both events are held in conjunction with St. Paul School at St. Paul. This is the 4th year we have joined St. Paul in putting on this event. The focus of the event for the freshman is to encourage students to not only respect themselves but others around them. For the 7th graders the focus is on giving "courage" to stand up for their fellow students against bullying and for themselves to progress into adulthood. It is quite a day for both grades and the students have found it very educational.

Last school year we initiated an Academic Assistance Program where students who were late on assignments would spend extra time before and after school finishing the assignments. When we first started the program we would consistently have 5-10 students every morning and 4-6 students in the afternoon. One year later, I'm happy to report, that numbers have fallen drastically. We are down to 1-3 students per day. The students have come to realize that if they are going to have to stay extra time at school anyway, they might as well do the assignment the first time. At the same time, our failing list has fallen 200% since last year!!!

Greg Morris - Secondary Principal

Helping Students Overcome Test Anxiety

Beth Wilke, Counselor

Test anxiety is almost universal. In fact, it is unusual to find a student who doesn't approach a big test without a high level of anxiety. Test anxiety can cause a host of problems in students, such as upset stomach, headache, loss of focus, fear, irritability, anger and even depression. New research is helping to better define how emotional stress and anxiety affect learning and academic performance.

Stressful emotions can inhibit a student's ability to absorb, retain and recall information. Anxiety creates a kind of "noise" or "mental static" in the brain that blocks our ability to retrieve what's stored in memory and also greatly impairs our ability to comprehend and reason. The key to understanding how anxiety inhibits cognitive and physical performance lies in understanding how emotions affect the rhythmic activity in the nervous system.

Feelings such as frustration, fear, anger and anxiety cause the neural activity in the two branches of the autonomic nervous system to get out of sync. This, in turn, affects the synchronized activity in the brain, disrupting our ability to think clearly. On the other hand, uplifting feelings such as appreciation lead to increased harmony and synchronization in the brain and nervous system, which facilitates our ability to think more clearly.

Research has shown that providing students with tools and strategies that build both emotional skills and healthy physical habits when preparing for a test can help them overcome test anxiety and the associated symptoms, while improving their ability to prepare for and perform on critical testing. It's important to help students identify what they are feeling and give them tools that will help them learn to manage emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, anger or frustration. The proper physical habits enable students to have enough energy and stamina for their brain to do its job of thinking and analyzing for a sustained period of time.

Here are a few tips from the Institute of HeartMath based on its TestEdge programs. Share these with your children ahead of time to better prepare them emotionally and physically for test taking.

Tips for Students:

Practice the neutral tool: When you have uncomfortable feelings about whether you will do well on the test, practice the neutral tool. It's important to catch negative mind loops that reinforce self-doubt or uncomfortable feelings. Every time you catch a negative thought repeating itself, stop the loop and practice going to neutral. Start by focusing on the area around your heart. This helps to take the focus off the mind loop. Then breathe deeply. Breathe as if your breath is flowing in and out through the center of your chest. Breathe quietly and naturally, four-five seconds on the in-breath, and four-five seconds on the out-breath. While you're breathing, try and find an attitude of calmness about the situation. Do this in the days leading up to the test, right before and during the test.

Address the what-if questions: A lot of times before we have to do something like take a test, much of the anxiety we feel is a build-up from negative "what if" thoughts. What if I fail, what if I can't remember anything, or what if I run out of time. Try writing a what-if question that is positive and can help you take the big deal out of the situation and begin to see things in a different way. Examples of these kinds of questions are,

What if I can remember more than I think I can? What if I can feel calmer than I think I can?

Think good thoughts: Science is showing that good feelings like appreciation can actually help your brain work better. When you feel nervous or anxious, try this. You can do it as many times as you need to or want to. Remember something that makes you feel good. Maybe it is your pet or how you felt when you got a big hug from your mom, or how you felt after a super fun day at the amusement park with your friends. After you remember how you felt, hold that feeling. Pretend you are holding it in your heart. Let yourself feel that feeling for 10-20 seconds or more. It's important to let yourself really feel that good feeling all over again. Practice this tool right before the big test.

Get enough sleep: Big tests require a lot of energy and stamina to be able to focus for several hours. Make sure you get at least eight-10 hours of sleep the night before the test.

Have fun: Do something fun the night before to take your mind off the test, like see a movie, play a board game with your family or participate in a sports activity. That way your mind and emotions are more relaxed in the time leading up to the test.

Eat a hearty breakfast: The brain needs a lot of energy to maintain focus on a big test for several hours. Eat a hearty and healthy breakfast, including complex carbohydrates and protein to make your energy last as long as possible. Foods such as eggs, cereal and whole-wheat toast help energize your brain to think more clearly and much longer compared with the fast-disappearing bolt of energy from drinking a pop or eating a cookie for breakfast. For a snack food, bring simple foods such as peanut butter and crackers or cheese and crackers to sustain energy until lunch.

Practicing these tools in advance of and during a test can help students limit test anxiety and perform even better on their school work.

This material has been provided by the Institute of HeartMath, a nonprofit research and education organization specializing in research on how stress and emotions impact learning and performance. To learn more about the TestEdge programs and tools for enhancing academic performance visit www.heartmath.org.

ATTENDANCE ALERT!!!

We are half-way through our first quarter at Palmer Public School for the 2019-2020 school year!! Time is flying and students are learning important information everyday. Because of this, school attendance is very crucial. We are already seeing substantial absenteeism in our building, and teachers and parents need to work together to increase attendance and bring our students one step closer to realizing their UNLIMITED potential!!

Studies show that chronic absenteeism is a RED ALERT that students are headed for academic trouble and eventually for dropping out of high school. Chronic absenteeism is students who miss 20 days or more for the entire school year. *Fact: Only 17% of students who are absent 10% or more of the school year during kindergarten and 1st grade can read at grade level after the 3rd grade.* This fact is startling. Reading is the most important skill students need to succeed in school!

Here are some helpful tips you can use to help your child come to school on time every day:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Don't let your child stay home unless he/she is truly sick (vomiting and/or temp above 100).
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, the school counselor, or other parents for advice on how to make him/her feel comfortable.
- Develop some backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

Let's work together to ensure your child is attending school regularly so that we can watch them become the successful student they are destined to be!!!



Greetings from Tiny Tigers Early Learning Center PreK 3's!

I can't believe it is already football season and school has been in session for over a month. I am so excited to be in my second year of teaching here at TTELC. I just have to say that I am so grateful for all of the support I have received from fellow teachers, the administration, our fantastic support staff and parents. I honestly believe this has to be the best place to be a teacher. I would also like to give a huge THANK YOU to all my families that came to Parent Teacher Conferences. We had a really good turnout. This goes to show what a great school and community we have here in Palmer.

Fall is upon us and our annual field trip to Helgoth's Pumpkin Patch is scheduled for October 2, 2019. I sure hope the weather cooperates for us! This is always a really good time for the students, parents and teachers. I really enjoy the hayrack ride out to pick pumpkins. So far, we have quite a few parent volunteers but we would love to have more. Of course, grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc. could volunteer as well.

This year the main focus of my teaching is going to be feelings; naming them, appropriate ways to express them and working through them. Three year olds have a lot of very big feelings in their little bodies and it is tough for them to know exactly what they are feeling and what to do about them. To help my littles work on this I have added social emotional posters in the classroom, special books about various emotions and issues that 3 year olds deal with and a number of other items to assist in teaching social emotional health.

I am so looking forward to getting to know all of my new families better and my students as well. We are having a blast so far so I know it is going to be another great year here in PreK 3's. Come by and visit us sometime!

Welcome to 6th Grade!

Mrs. Samuelson

The twenty-one 6th graders have been off to a busy start of the year! We have a lot to accomplish in what seems like a very short time. It is my job, as 6th grade teacher, to not only to teacher the students the required curriculum, but also to prepare them with the tools they will need to be successful in Junior High next year, as well as high school and beyond. One of the main keys to student success is Responsibility. We work all year on requiring students to be responsible for their classwork, getting their assignment book signed daily, remembering to bring all supplies they need for each class, and getting their homework done daily. I strive to prepare them for 7th grade the best that I can.

We have been working on Language Art skills such as setting, character, plot, and theme of a story, compare and contrast, vocabulary, synonyms, and parts of speech. That is just a few of the many things the students have been learning.

We are exploring the many different aspects of Social Studies in our first few chapters. And in Science we are enjoying our new Amplify Science Curriculum. The 6th graders are studying Microbiomes and the 5th graders are studying the Patterns of Earth and Sky.

I enjoy this group of students and look forward to continuing to teach them and watching them learn and grow!

Title I Information

- Teacher:
 - Mrs. Becky Meyer taught first grade here at Palmer for the past seven years and has now moved into the Title I teaching position.
- What we Do:
 - Identify students who are most in need of educational help
 - Measure student progress
 - Develop programs that add to regular classroom instruction
 - Provide small group instruction
 - Provide one-on-one and small group reading and math interventions
- What Parents Can Do:
 - Share information about your child's interests and abilities
 - Speak up if you notice any academic problems
 - Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences
 - Attend school events with your child
- Share a Love of Learning:
 - Read newspapers, books, and magazines
 - Use math to prepare budgets and compare prices
 - Visit the library together
 - Help your child read signs while on an outing
 - Read to your child and have them read to you
 - Encourage good study habits (quiet place, be available to help, allow breaks)

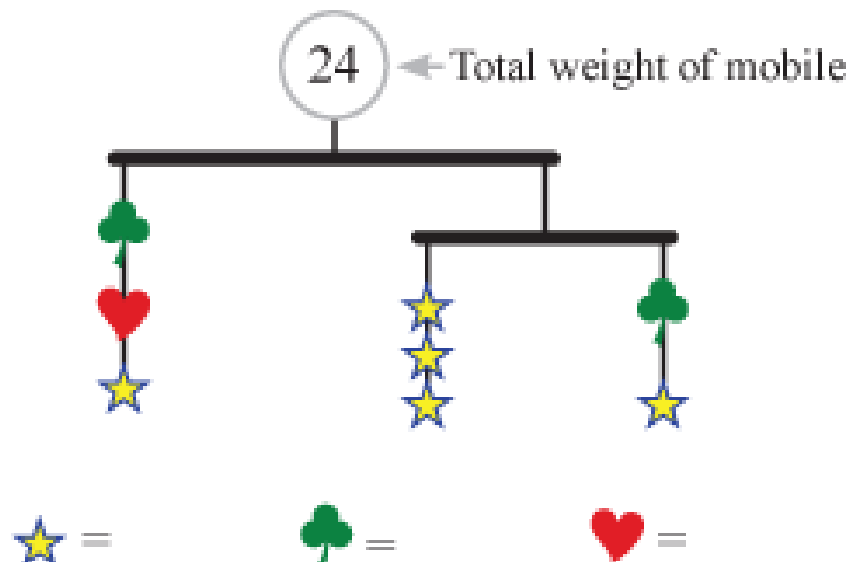
Questions about the Title I program?

Contact Mrs. Meyer at bmeyer@palmer.esu7.org

This year is off to a wonderful start! A strange thing happened on the first day of school this year...I knew the name of every student who walked into my classroom (besides the kids coming from other schools). This definitely validated my feelings that at year 3, Palmer feels like home, and I truly love it here.

Exciting things are happening in Math Intervention! We are using a new curriculum that teaches students math through visual puzzles. The resource makes typical math problems visual and concrete so students can use logic to solve them. The level of thinking I'm seeing my students do is unbelievable, and it makes me excited to see how my students will grow in math this year. I love how this resource starts off simple and builds each day to more challenging problems. Below is just one example of the many types of puzzles students are working on. The book will eventually replace the symbols with letters to help students solve typical algebra problems. By having students work visually first, the students will have a more concrete understanding of typical algebra problems.

Think of this puzzle as a mobile. It has to balance. Can you figure out how much each symbol is worth?



**Have your student bring me the answer for a special treat!*

Please let me know if you or your students have any questions or concerns. The best way to get ahold of me is by email at hroyle@palmer.esu7.org. We can schedule a phone call or meeting if necessary.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Royle

7-12 Math & Physics

Look Out, Library!

Palmer Public School Library is always busy and working to improve its services for our students. The summer reading program wrapped up in June, but awards and prizes were just handed out this week. It was a great time to hand out these awards since it was difficult to have library time with the book fair set up. As always, the generosity of the school community amazes me! Many children went home with books for their own libraries, but our teachers build their classroom libraries for their students. For every book purchased, money comes to the school library to purchase books for teachers and library. Kids benefit from your purchase. Thank you!

During the month of July, I was busy preparing for a guest visitor for our library. The students were shocked when they walked in the library on Friday, September 13. Kelli Wood and Zeke were there waiting for them. Zeke is a Therapy Dog, and Kelli is his handler. Kelli gave a 15 minute presentation to students in grades K-6 to introduce Zeke and expectations when they are with him. I will be inviting Zeke one day each month, so students can read with him. He is a really good listener!



NHS Members Busy

National Honor Society is a prestigious organization in that a student needs to meet a certain GPA to be invited, and then after completing an application, be selected by a committee. But this organization isn't about just making the grades; it is also about volunteerism. We are a service organization.

Before school began in August, members were put to work to beautify the school grounds. We pulled weeds, laid out mulch, swept, painted doors, and painted games on the playground. The playground games of four square and hopscotch were faded and it was difficult to see the lines. Members not only painted those lines, but also added the three point line and free-throw line by the basketball hoops. We also painted the class numbers on the sidewalk so students know where to line up from recess. These projects may seem simple but are rewarding not only for NHS members to give back to their school and community, but for our elementary students as well.

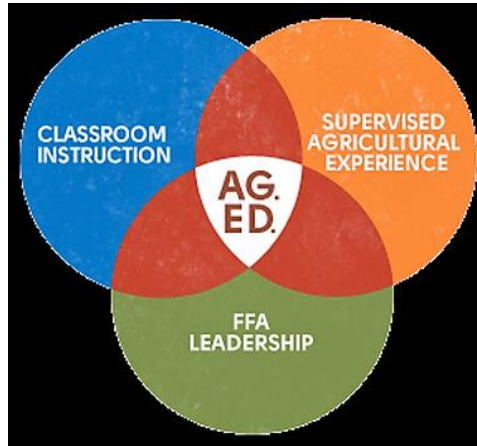


Mrs. Kroeger

Agricultural Education

Wow! It seems like the first few weeks of school have gone so quickly. We're heading into October at full speed.

First, for those I haven't met yet, my name is Juliana Kroeger and I am the agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor. This is a year of firsts for me. It's my first year teaching at Palmer, my first year teaching, and my husband and I just celebrated our first wedding anniversary! I live between Dannebrog and St. Libory on my husband, Jeremy's, family farm. I love to help on the farm when I can, horseback ride, and travel. My favorite place I've visited is Scotland, but I hope to continue to add to my travel list. I'm so excited to be part of the Tiger community. I've truly felt welcomed by all the staff, students, and community members.



Here's a little update on some of the happenings in the ag. ed. world:

Classroom Instruction: We've had a great start to classes this year. Currently, students are enrolled in either Exploring Agriculture, Introduction to AFNR, Plant Science, Animal Science, Introduction to Shop, Advanced Shop, or Agribusiness and Leadership. Each class has been studying a variety of topics including FFA history, the importance of soil, the beef industry, starting a business, and tool identification.

FFA Leadership: We've had one FFA meeting this year that was very well attended! Most students are already involved in many ways; working concession stands to raise money for the chapter, planning events throughout the year, and competing in competitions, to name a few. We have been working hard on range judging competition over the past few weeks and will transition into land judging soon. The students have been very excited and are putting in lots of extra time before and after school studying for contests. New this year, FFA is using a points system. For each event, conference, competition, meeting, or other method of involvement that a member participates in, they receive a certain number of points. At the end of the year, these points will be used for incentives for conventions and awards.

Supervised Agricultural Experience: Each student in my class is required to have an exploratory Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). This will be a graded component of class. Students must receive 10 points per semester for full credit. Points are earned by completing a variety of tasks that they can choose from. Some tasks include: college visits, career exploration, and journal extras from their other SAE project if they choose to have one.

SAE's are designed to enhance the learning of agricultural students by providing them with hands-on experiences. In addition to the exploratory SAE, students can record their experiences in their other SAE in the online record keeping system Agricultural Experience Tracker. This website houses the student's project information and builds on itself over their time in Ag. Ed. Any FFA student who wishes to compete for chapter, district, or state proficiency awards, or work toward their State FFA Degree must keep track of their other SAE on AET.