

Blue Pride Report

Homer and Hartnett Elementary Schools

October 2014

Homer Elementary and Hartnett Elementary

When thinking about our district vision statement PRIDE, I can honestly say that the partnerships that students and staff in each building have formed so far during the beginning of the school year have been positive. Faculty and staff rely on each other in planning and meeting the needs of their students. This happens through collaborative team meetings at each grade level along with combined planning. Planning occurs each school day and on weekends by many of our faculty members as evident by the amount of vehicles that are parked in our lots on the weekends. The job never ends for our faculty and staff.

Partnerships are occurring within the student bodies at each building as well. I have witnessed this first hand during a game of football played at Hartnett. One of the younger students became very frustrated as he dropped many passes during the game. The older students did not push him away from the game but encouraged him to remain in the game and to do his best.

This partnership also occurs at the elementary school each day. Students who are in second grade have become good role models for our younger students. I have spoken with each second grade class about being role models and I can honestly say that they are trying their best to portray positive character traits when interacting with our younger students. I witnessed this first hand as well when a second grade student took the hand of a kindergarten student and led him into the building when the student became disoriented with his surroundings.



October 2014

1. PRIDE Council has re-organized to allow more student participation. We have a group of elected leaders for pep rallies and three sub-committees to work on school climate. We had 125 students come to our informational session- that is a quarter of the students that want to help make our school a better place!! Luckily, we have many more adults and outside partnerships to help create a caring community for all students.
2. Dan the Snake Man visited the grade 5 students to supplement our science instruction. Mrs. Pamela Russell, grade 5 TA, planned the day for the students. Students were able to hold many of the reptiles as Dan presented to the small groups of students.
3. Students celebrated patriotism in our September Pep Rally. Our new PRIDE council assisted with the awards, game of Minute to Win It and shared what responsibility means to them for October's theme. Parents were invited to attend this month- look for our first pep rally in the Homer News!
4. Teachers from grade 3-5 participated in the Collegial Inquiry training at SUNY Cortland. This training was made possible by the IM:PACT grant. Teachers well led by NYSUT professionals. SUNY Cortland staff as well as educators from surrounding districts came together to learn how to more efficiently look at student work and solve problems in our school. Teachers were excited by the protocols and are already planning how to implement the process. Three of our ICT classrooms are working with the IM:PACT grant this school year.

Homer Junior High
Blue Pride Spotlight Items
10/14/14 Board of Education meeting

Gamification, Differentiation, and Achievement

In an effort to further motivate and engage 8th grade Spanish students and create a classroom environment with well-managed behavior and participation, teachers have implemented the use of Classcraft. Classcraft is an online gaming platform that turns the classroom into a gamified learning zone. Currently, gamification in the classroom is all the rage and teachers report tremendous success with it so far!

Students are divided into teams within each class and create team names and assign roles to each player. As class carries on, the “game-master” assigns XP, or experience points to each student if they have completed their homework, answer a question correctly in class, help a classmate having trouble, or even find typos in the class notes. As students accumulate XP, they can level-up to earn “powers”, or privileges that are unique to their character role. Examples of such powers are: having a snack during class, asking for an answer on a quiz, dropping a zero from the grade book, or listening to music during class work.

Since students are so motivated to earn XP, we have tied assessments in with the game; creating a method of assessment that accommodates different learning styles and ability levels and also motivates students to push themselves to higher achievement and higher-order thinking. We have seen an increase in student motivation and confidence with increased differentiation and focus on individual abilities.

We hope to see a trend over the course of the year that proves that the students really can take charge of their studies and strive for higher achievement and increased higher-order thinking and that this will translate to other areas of their lives and education as well.

6-8 ELA/Math Subject Area Days

In consultation with Chris DiFulvio (ELA coach) and John Kirkwyland (Math coach), 6-8 ELA and Math Subject Area Days have been planned and scheduled for next week. For both groups, the morning will be spent talking about best practices and analyzing data to inform instruction, while the afternoon will be curriculum refinement and development.

Camp Owahta

Sixth graders took a field trip to Camp Owahta to learn about our great outdoors recently. They visited a variety of stations to discuss composting, New York's native fruits and vegetables, boat and safety, energy, and more. It was a day filled with educated presenters (Mr. Barry included), great weather, and wonderfully polite and enthusiastic sixth graders!

High School Blue Pride Activities for October - 2014

Teens Test Cattle Skills at Fair

Five teens from Cortland County (McKenzie Brown, Liz Crossett & Thomas Pitman II from Homer High) were showing their cattle skills and competing against some of the best in the agriculture industry during an open breed show at the New York State Fair. The five participants this year first had to compete in the Cortland County Junior Fair before being selected to participate in the New York State Fair. This all came about from the Truxton-based New Penn Farm's Youth Outreach Program put together by farm owner Carl Hinkle.

Cortland YMCA Stingers

The Homer Central Students who participate in the Cortland YMCA Stingers include Henry Belton, James Belton, Leah Capps, Madysen Eckhardt, Nick Eckhardt, Emily Elliott, Madeline Gallagher, Michael Gregor, Baylee Hamilton, Bradley Keith, Caleigh Stone and Reid Withey.

Homer Freshman Michael Gregor lead the team with personal best times, beating his own personal fastest time almost every time he hit the water. Michael qualified for and finished the summer season at the Niagara LSC Long Course Championships at ECC's Flickinger Center in Buffalo, NY where he earned more best times and placed in several events.

Micheal Gregor at USA Swimming: Niagara LSC LC Champs: Boys 13-14 age group:

- 100m Free Style 15th place
- 200m Individual Medley 18th place
- 200m Back Stroke 5th place
- 50m Free Style 6th period
- 100m Back Stroke 8th period

Homer Senior Bradley Keith qualified for and finished the 2014 summer season at YMCA Long Course National Championship at Indiana University Natatorium at UIPUI in Indianapolis, Indiana July 28-August 1 (his second summer competing at the National Level). Bradley swam a personal best every time in every race he swam at the National Competition.

Bradley Keith at 2014 YMCA Swimming Long Course National Championship

- 100m Back Stroke 95th place
- 50m Back Stroke 58th place

Great Job Stingers.

National Merit Scholarship Commended Student

We have been advised by the National Merit Scholarship Program that Bradley Keith has been awarded a letter of commendation in the 2015 program. Brad is one of 34,000 commended students throughout the nation that are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise, representing the top 5 percent of the more than 1.5million students who entered the 2015 competition.

High School Blue Pride Activities for October - 2014

- Homecoming parade – Friday, October 10th
- Spirit Week – Monday, October 6- Friday, October 10th (Student Government worked hard and successfully promoted school spirit during the 2014 Spirit Week events which included spirit theme dress days, as well as a pep rally and parade.)
- Pep Rally – Wednesday, October 8th
- SADD Game Night on Friday, October 3rd (SADD held a successful Game Night October 3rd with a Movie Night planned for October 17th. Admission covers the costs for the night.)