



*Wishing you a
very Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year!*



Girard Unified School District No. 248
415 N. Summit
Girard, KS 66743

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. Postage
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Friends of U.S.D. #248

USD 248
GIRARD
SCHOOLS



Winter • 2017

(Cont.d from page 2)

options for students to become certified in different technical areas.

Off campus, GHS has students that attend vocational programs through Fort Scott and Coffeyville Community Colleges. Students who are Juniors and Seniors may attend partial day classes if they are on track with graduation requirements.

Crawford County Technical School, in partnership with Fort Scott Community College, offers classes in Masonry, HVAC, Construction and Welding. Students take these classes as part of their school day and earn both high school and college credit. Also offered through FSCC are classes in Cosmetology, Culinary Arts and Emergency Medical Technology.

Coffeyville Community College branch in Columbus offers Collision Repair Technology, Automotive

Technology, and Certified Nursing Assistant classes that are open to high school students. Currently, GHS has several students enrolled in these classes. Students who complete vocational programs through these community colleges have the opportunity to graduate from high school with state and nationally certified credentials in their chosen field.

Girard Middle School students are also being exposed to the concept of career readiness. GMS 8th grade students recently participated in "Career Day". Thanks to 17 guest speakers, students were given insight into multiple career options, and then took a trip to the Fort Scott Building and Trades Center in Pittsburg, where they learned about several technical careers.

"Our 8th grade Career Day was an eye-opening experience for our youngsters," said GMS Principal Brannon Kidd. "It gave them a great opportunity to learn about professions they were interested in and what it would take to enter that profession. We are so thankful for all those who volunteered their time to share!"



GMS 8th graders learn about welding careers at the Fort Scott Building and Trades Center in Pittsburg during Career Day.

District Begins Process of Updating Strategic Plan

In the fall of 2012, Girard School District #248 began gathering input from school district stakeholders in order to create a 5-year District Strategic Plan. The creation of a District Strategic Plan is the first step in establishing and achieving concrete short- and long-term goals for a school district. Future financial, personnel, and facilities decisions can then be made based on their alignment to the plan and whether they are helping the district move toward the established goals.

Five years after this initial Strategic Plan was created, school district superintendent Blaise Bauer is pleased with the status of items determined to be needs for our district at that time.

"We are very proud as we look back on our first Strategic Plan and can

see everything we were able to accomplish," said Bauer. "With our community's help, we addressed the issues that our district was facing, particularly facility concerns."

With the completion of the 5-year term for the Strategic Plan developed in 2012, the school district has begun working to create a new Strategic Plan that will guide them through the next five years.

Professional education consultant Dr. Chris Christman, who assisted the school district with the development of the first Strategic Plan, returned to help facilitate meetings with district stakeholders. Dr. Christman has met with groups representing Girard students, staff, parents, business leaders, community members and district patrons.

District patrons were also invited to take an online survey. This was a new tool that was not available during development of the first Strategic Plan. The results of the survey, along with information gathered at meetings, will be compiled and analyzed by the Board of Education and school administration and included in the updated Strategic Plan.

"We are excited to begin the process of developing a new Strategic Plan," said Bauer. "We've gathered some valuable feedback from patrons, and have already begun to address some items. Meeting the needs of our student body and maintaining a strong relationship with our community are our primary goals, and these Strategic Plans are essential in achieving those goals."

SUPERINTENDENT

Blaise Bauer
415 N. Summit
Girard, KS 66743
(620) 724-4325

www.girard248.org

USD 248 SCHOOL BOARD

David Goble, President
Roger Breneman
Dale Coomes
Lori Johnson
Beth Murphy
Dale Shireman
Tony Stonerock

IN THIS ISSUE:

District Begins Process of Updating Strategic Plan
Superintendent's Message
Girard Students Gain On- and Off-Campus Experience
What's "News" in Our Schools

They say the only thing constant is change. I believe that to be true. Our school district has certainly undergone many changes in the twenty years that I have been privileged to work in Girard schools. Changes in leadership and staff, changes in facilities, changes in our community. Some changes are good, others prove to be more of a challenge.

These changes are the reason our district is committed to reviewing our District Strategic Plan every five years. New staff bring new ideas and new gifts. Changes in our community present new opportunities and challenges. Former Girard graduates return to our community with fresh ideas and a valuable perspective.

As a school district, we must be able to adapt to changes in educational climate, changes in the workforce for which we are preparing our students, and changes in the individual needs of our student body. Additionally, we must always capitalize on those attributes that give Girard schools the competitive edge that our graduates continually experience. Analyzing this information on a regular basis is imperative if we are to maintain the level of excellence for which Girard schools are known.

Input from all district stakeholders, along with community support, is vital. I often say, "The community is a reflection of the schools, and the schools are a reflection of the community." This relationship is so important for the success of our schools and our community. Progress takes time. Unfortunately, deterioration happens quickly. We are committed to setting goals that will have a positive impact on our community, so that our schools are always a force for progress that encourages growth and prosperity in our community.

We are very grateful for community interest and input as we update our Strategic Plan. We encourage you to be involved. If you have not been in the updated portions of our school buildings, you should schedule a visit. They are impressive. We are so proud of them and have you to thank!

Girard Students Gain On- and Off-Campus Experience

Nationwide, high schools are addressing the shortfall of life skills and career readiness among graduates by adding courses and off-campus opportunities to their curriculum. While college bound students typically report feeling prepared for post-high school scholastics, students looking to enter the work force after graduation express an overall lack of confidence in their general life skills, and feel less prepared to secure a career. Girard schools are addressing this need both "in-house" and by working in cooperation with area vo-tech schools.

"What we realized early on in our current Strategic Plan meetings," Superintendent Blaise Bauer commented, "was that our patrons are unaware of some of the unique opportunities Girard students have for career prep."

Girard High School students have many in-house options in regards to Business and Technical classes. Last year, in an effort to kick start the business program and to ensure that all students are exposed to financial literacy concepts, all freshmen were required to take one semester of Personal Finance. This year, freshmen are required to take a full year of Introduction to Personal

Finance/Business. This class covers concepts such as balancing accounts, budgeting, financial planning, banking and loans, personal insurance, and career exploration. GHS also offers a second year business class in Accounting. This class covers financial processes, including a full accounting cycle, payroll, taxes, debts, depreciation, and periodic adjustments.

Girard High School also offers a variety of Career and Technical Education classes that students may take throughout their high school careers. These vocational programs, which are housed at GHS, include Agriculture Technology, Engineering and Construction Technology, and Family and Consumer Science. These programs offer a wide variety of



GHS Construction Trades instructor Craig Siebert oversees student work during his Construction Trades class.



GMS 8th graders hear from a circuitry trainer about AC/Furnace Units at the Fort Scott Building and Trades Center in Pittsburg.

RVH News

TEACHER OPPORTUNITY

This fall, 3rd grade teachers Ashleigh Brauer and Tessa Johnson had the opportunity to attend the ECET2Kansas (Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teaching and Teachers in Kansas) conference. Mrs. Brauer was nominated and chosen to attend, and was asked to bring another person from the district. The goal of this teacher-led conference is to empower Kansas teachers to grow, collaborate, and lead in a variety of ways to affect change in our classrooms, schools, district, communities, and in the teaching profession. During the conference, Ashleigh and Tessa attended many sessions that showcased cutting-edge instruction and activities. Sessions they attended included Breakout EDU, using Skype and Global activities in the classroom, and Robotics/Coding. The goal for this conference was for teachers to return to their schools inspired to lead in the teaching profession and improve student outcomes.



HOLIDAY HOOPLA

On Nov. 10th, the RVH PTO hosted their annual Holiday Hoopla event. Chili and cinnamon rolls were served. Families took pictures with Santa, visited local vendor displays, played bingo, participated in a hat/cake walk, and watched *The Emoji Movie*. Themed baskets and teacher experiences were part of a silent auction that families and guests could bid on. The event was well attended, and \$3,000 was raised for PTO. This money goes back into our school to fund projects and teacher grants. RVH Assistant Principal Tina Peak expressed gratitude to all of the volunteers who helped make the evening possible and to all of the parents and students for attending.

GMS News

COMMUNITY SERVICE

A couple days a week, GMS 8th graders are learning the importance of giving back to the community by spending time doing community clean-up around the town square and the GHS/GMS school campus.

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

On Nov. 15th, all GMS students listened to nationally known guest speaker Brooks Gibbs speak on how to handle the "school bully". Mr. Gibbs shared his message later that evening with local church youth groups.

On Nov. 17th, GMS 8th graders participated in "Career Day". The first half of the day, students rotated through their choice of 17 speakers who shared information about their professions. We are so grateful to these individuals for their contributions and the insight they were able to share with our 8th grade students! The second half of the school day, all 8th graders took a field trip to the Fort Scott Building and Trades Center in Pittsburg. Students were able to see, listen, and participate in all the programs they have to offer.

ATHLETICS UPDATE

Our fall GMS athletic teams enjoyed a great season! All of our volleyball programs finished in the top 3 in our league. Seventh grade football finished 2nd in our league, and our 8th grade team finished 8-0, earning the title of League Champions for the 2017 football season. Congratulations to all participants!

GMS winter activities are off to a great start as well. Our basketball teams (girls/boys 7A&B, 8A&B) are all undefeated after 4 games. We also have students participating in wrestling through a cooperative agreement with Southeast. These student athletes are also competing at a high level.

WEEKLY EMAILS

Parents and guardians, stay up-to-date with "GMS News & Events" by making sure we have your email on file. A weekly newsletter is sent out every Sunday evening that gives details of the past week and any upcoming events for the new week ahead. Add your address and receive these emails by calling the GMS office at 620-724-4114.

GHS News

THE TROJAN WAY

In an effort to maintain and foster a positive school climate at GHS, the Building Leadership Team combined with student volunteers have started a program to focus on positive character traits coined "The Trojan Way". This process began after a Building Leadership Team meeting during which staff discussed the importance of maintaining a good school culture. Following this meeting, school staff met with multiple classes to gain input from students on what they believe are important attributes of a GHS Trojan.

The traits identified by students and staff were as follows:

- Respect, Empathy and Acceptance
- Perseverance and Work Ethic
- Honesty, Accountability and Ownership
- Humility, Kindness and Courtesy
- Selflessness and Teamwork
- Courage and Honor

While meeting with students, one of the ideas suggested was to start a new group that is student-driven and focuses on these traits. From this suggestion, the school created the Trojan Ambassadors, which will lead activities within the district that will reinforce the traits important to the Trojan Way. This group will focus on one set of traits each month. They began in November with Respect, Empathy and Acceptance. Student volunteers made posters that are visible around the school and shared quotes during morning announcements. Currently, students are developing plans to talk with middle and elementary school students about these concepts in an effort to establish the Trojan Way throughout the district.

One of the greatest assets of high school graduates, as identified by potential employers, are quality "soft skills," which this program will emphasize. We anticipate that the Trojan Way program will not only help maintain a good school climate, but will also increase students' employability and life skills.