

August 2018

the **Be**AT



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Committing, Caring and Connecting

New superintendent Jason Alexander encouraged staff to begin the school year with a renewed emphasis on committing, caring and connecting at opening activities.

“One of the high points that I see is a very committed staff to doing what’s best for kids,” Alexander said in the Beatrice Daily Sun. “That was very evident even last spring when I visited...That goes for everyone from the teaching staff to the custodial staff and everyone in between. That’s one of the high points.”

Alexander also talked about caring in the same article. “I think this is a community that really cares about its school,” he said. “I think that’s easy to see when you drive through the town and see the Beatrice ‘O’ on different driveways and yards. It’s a community that’s really behind its school system.”



He encouraged staff to connect with both students and other staff members. He felt this was the first step to a successful educational experience.

He ended his talk by recognizing the efforts of assistant superintendent Dr. Jackie Nielsen.

Nineteen new teachers join Beatrice Public Schools



Beatrice Public Schools welcomed 19 new teachers including: (front) Heather Heble, Vicki Heard, Megan Scheele, Rebecca Meagher, Brandi Knapp, Nicole Zvolanek, Claire Weber, Theresa Levesque, Hannah Boucher. (back) Philip Voigt, Jaxson Kenton, Shannon Burgess, Anna Scarborough, Dustin Hahn, Macie Coffey, Charles Humphrey, Todd Ekart, AJ Jaramillo, Mark McClanahan

Summer School

From **safaris** to **sign language**, something for everyone at Best Possible Summer



Best Possible Summer's numbers grew to over 300 with classes about Escape Rooms, the Wild, Wild West, Food is Fun, and Underwater Adventures.

An afternoon session was added with classes in Basketball, Track and Field, Soccer, Football, Let's Visit the Zoo, Sign Language and Gardening. The afternoon session was sponsored by the Beatrice Educational Foundation.



Summer School

Workshops help teachers get energized for the year



Jenna Larsen, Brenda Meyer and Christy Strubel at the SDT Conference in Las Vegas.. Ed Ankrom and Pam Trauernicht at the Co-Teaching Conference in Chicago.

Teachers and administrators throughout the district spent time over the summer preparing for the next year by attending workshops and conference throughout the nation. This is a look at some of the ways teachers gained new skills, and new ideas.

In early July, Jenna Larsen, Brenda Meyer, and Christy Strubel traveled to Las Vegas, NV for the Staff Development for Teachers National Conference. "It was an amazing experience," said Strubel. We were able to learn from our educational rock stars that we gain ideas from through professional reading, blog posts and videos," said Strubel.

All three found it a valuable experience. "We were energized and motivated to try new things in our own classrooms and saw first hand how others around the country do things in their classrooms. We were able to gain new knowledge from presenters such as Gerry Brooks, Katie Knights, Cara Carrol, Jen Jones, Reagan Tunstall, Michael Bonner and Kayla Delzer," added Strubel.

Steph Coudeyras and Carol Oltman attended a workshop to get ideas on how to encourage parent involvement in the college decision process.

Senior high mathematics teachers Pam Trauernicht and Ed Ankrom attended a four day co-teaching conference in Chicago. The first two and half days of the conference informed the group about the two different levels of co-teaching that can occur and the four phases of integrating co-teaching into the classroom. Later on teams presented on different aspects of co-teaching.

Trauernicht and Ankrom focused on the three major roles that people play with making co-teaching successful. Those roles involve the general education teacher, the special education teacher and the administrator. Last year Trauernicht co-taught with special education teacher Tiffany Tracy with Integrated Algebra. This year the co-teaching model is being expanded and Tracy will be co-teaching with Erin Hamilton in Integrated Geometry. Last summer Tracy and Emily Iverson attended the training.

Preschool teachers Cierra Beranek, Heather Heble, Megan Scheele, and Laura Koenig attended several workshops including Structured Teach, Intense Verbal Behavior, Learning without Tears, and STEPS Training.

Dr. Joan Christen, senior high science teacher, attended a cancer workshop at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

In late July, administrators attended Administrator's Days at Kearney. Dr. Jackie Nielsen and Betty Replogle presented a session on the success of the Best Possible Summer.

Special Education staff members had a variety of workshops to choose from for additional training in the summer. This was made possible by a grant written by Beth Cordry-Hookstra, director of special education.

Choices included the following:

1. Structured Teach- Structured teaching is an approach in instructing children with autism. It allows for implementation of a variety of instructional methods (e.g., visual support strategies, Picture Exchange Communication System - PECS, sensory integration strategies, discrete trial, music/rhythm intervention strate-

gies, etc.). As the name states, it is very structured and consistently utilized with the child across settings.

2. Intensive Verbal Behavior- A program of instruction for involved learners that is based on continuing research (BF Skinner), focuses on the child developing a functional form of communication and teaches children that language is useful.

3. Ready Approach (sensory processing)- This training covers the basics of sensory processing and brain driven behaviors that occur when the sensory system is compromised. Sensory strategies will be utilized so you can cope with and de-

crease difficult situations like aggression. Attendees also learn how to safely transfer and lift individuals with sensory processing deficits.

4. Co-Teaching That Works- Four high school teachers have attended a 4 day co-teaching conference with the goal of integrating co-teaching practices across all core curricular areas in the high school setting. The teachers in attendance are now able to train other district staff members in co-teaching practices. The goal is to initiate co-teaching practices into the already inclusive practices at the middle school.



They first staked their claim with Beatrice Public Schools and now making a difference every day

First a student, now assistant superintendent



“Beatrice Public Schools was an integral part of my preparation for my college experience. Ever since I was a little child, I knew I wanted to be a teacher – I just did not know what I wanted to teach. During high school, I was able to have many wonderful teachers who inspired me to go into the field of education. Madame Korslund and Mrs. Bauman both instilled into me a deeper love of learning. Both teachers had a strong passion for educating the students of Beatrice so they were successful for future endeavors. During my student teaching experience in college, I chose to return to Beatrice High School so I could continue to learn more from both of them. I received a degree in English and French with an endorsement in secondary education.”

Dr. Jackie (Seitz) Nielsen



Beatrice Public Schools All-Stars
Jackie Nielsen, class of 1996

Dr. Jackie Nielsen became the assistant superintendent on July 1 after serving as director of curriculum for seven years.

After college, she taught freshmen English and French at LaVista Junior High. She continued to Hannibal, Missouri, to teach English and Journalism to juniors for two years.

Next she found herself in the Omaha Public School system working at Omaha Northwest High Magnet School. “I was very fortunate in this position to develop my leadership roles,” said Nielsen. “I was a curriculum specialist in the areas of social studies, English, and world language while helping to develop the magnet school concept of Law, Government, and International Diplomacy.”

At the end of her tenure in Omaha Public Schools, she reconnected with another mentor and teacher from Beatrice

whose position she filled. “Dr. Pat Roschewski was a strong support system as I moved into the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for Beatrice Public

Schools,” said Nielsen. “She continues to be a mentor to me.”

Currently, as the Assistant Superintendent of Beatrice

Public Schools she works with teachers, administrators, students and other stakeholders to ensure Beatrice public school students are successful in their educational journey.



Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jackie Nielsen in her office holding a Marzano book on High Reliability Schools.



(above) Dave Koch leads the technology department and responsible for day to day operations as well as keeping the district current with technology. (below) Koch stands by his truck with a special license plate that lets everyone know two important interests, his Harley and his grandchildren.

Koch named Employee of the Month

Dave Koch was the May employee of the month.

There are some jobs in the District that are expected, needed and much behind the scenes. Without these people in positions such as this, with their numerous hours dedicated towards making sure the District runs smoothly, we as a District would struggle.

One such person is Dave Koch. Dave is the frontline person for technology in the District, representing our interests throughout Nebraska and beyond, dealing daily with the many companies, websites, and departments that he works with, insuring our jobs run smoothly.

Ultimately, Dave is the one who fields all complaints when technology is not working properly, even when it is through no fault of his. Dave oversees a great staff that works with, and supports him. Without Dave's quiet, endless dedication to this District, "I know I would be at a loss," said his nominator.

Another member of the staff shared her thoughts, "Dave's job is one that we all take for granted. We walk in each day and expect our computers, phones, tablets and all other technology to be up and running 24/7. When it is not working properly he is

our go-to person and many times the one we blame if it isn't working right. We are bound by technology and frustrated when it doesn't work correctly."

He goes above and beyond to make sure the district's needs are met for our students. Even on regular days when things are working up to par he puts in long hours to make sure State testing, and other testing or training will work efficiently in the District. "Just because we do not have to contact him with a problem doesn't mean he isn't working long hours to make it go smoothly. We make sure to give him grief when things are not running well but the accolades are short in coming when things run well," said his nominator.

Another staff member shared additional thoughts, "I, for one, am grateful for his dedication to the betterment and growth of our District. Even though I have not thanked Dave enough for all of the changes made, not only for the employees, but for each of our students, I feel by nominating Dave I am doing just that. Dave's position has been thankless, mostly due to the nature of the job. We expect everything pertaining to technology to run when we need it to do so and when it doesn't sometimes he is our sounding block."



Board approves handbooks for new year

New superintendent Jason Alexander said his first week has been a whirlwind and he said he has spent time talking with Dr. Jackie Nielsen to familiarize himself with the district and planning for the upcoming school year.

Superintendent's Report

Alexander shared a financial report he put together with the Board. He said it is an organizational tool he has used in the past that provides a brief summation of where we are at as a district with brief explanations of funds. He said he will continue to work on ways to identify, explain, and provide Board members with the most current financial information.

Committee of the Whole

Vice-President Doris Martin said the committee met on June 28 at the middle school and heard reports on multiculturalism, the strategic plan and policy updates by Dr. Nielsen

Action Agenda

Discussion was held on the first reading of a number of policies including Re-

cording of Others, Title 1 Parent and Family Member Engagement, Title 1 Funds, Insufficient Funds, Recognition for Service of Employees, Employee Anti-discrimination Anti-harassment and Anti-retaliation, Child Abuse Reporting, Para Procedure, Student Anti-discrimination, Married Students or Students with Children, Search and Seizures, Random Drug Testing, Student Discipline Policy, and Assessments-Academic Content Standards.

The only new policy was the Reading Instruction and Assessment and was developed because of legislation that passed this spring which requires districts to develop policies to facilitate reading instruction and intervention with groups of students. The policy gives a year of planning for implementation but the district already has a significant amount of the pieces in place making sure that notification of deficiencies is sent out within 15 days will need to be closely monitored. Alexander said it is probably safe to say that this is already being done within the district.

The board approved the 2018-19 Elementary and Middle School Student

Handbooks. It also approved the interlocal contract for enrichment activities and the Board of Education Meeting Pamphlet.

Administrator's Report

Nielsen said the district had another great year of the Best Possible Summer experience. She went through a slideshow summarizing the program. The slideshow featured images of the classes. She thanked community partners that help make the program successful and talked about the growth, rationale and expectations of the program over the last four years.

Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be on Aug. 22 at 6 p.m. in the Central Administration Building. The next board meeting will be on Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Central Administration Building.

Beatrice Public Schools Board of Education

Janet Byars

Doris Martin, Vice-President

Lisa Pieper

Nancy Sedlacek

Steve Winter

Jon Zimmerman, President

Board of Education Meetings

August 22, 6 p.m.

Committee of the Whole Meeting

Sept. 10, 7 p.m.

Board of Education Meeting



Teachers react to the introduction of Gerry Brooks, a passionate public speaker whose focus was on encouraging and helping teachers improve their instructional abilities and to also help administrators successfully lead their staffs.