

Northern Lights

Weekly News and Notes from Hanna, Elk Mountain, and Medicine Bow Elementary Schools



Calendar Reminders

- Tomorrow is a school day. Early release at 1:00. Support the Miners in their Homecoming games.
- Next Friday, September 26, we will **not** have enrichment activities because we will not have buses available. October 3 will be Water Testing in Elk Mountain with the Conservation District.
- There has been a calendar change for the week of October 6. Students will not have school on Monday, October 6, but will attend for a full day on Friday, October 10.

Next Week

- **Monday**
- **Tuesday**
- **Wednesday**

Hanna Elementary September Birthday Lunch with Mr. Shipp

HES Dental Check ups

- **Thursday**

AM-Mr. Shipp in Saratoga for meeting

- **Friday**

No School for Students –Teacher Inservice Day in Saratoga



Elk Mountain students learn about and celebrate our nation's constitution on Constitution Day.

Notes from the Principal

From Good to Great

What makes a good teacher? There are many qualities that we look for when we hire new teachers, and it would be very hard to narrow things down to just a few things. However, a recent article in the Wall Street Journal highlighted a few qualities that are apparent in great teachers. To summarize:

Great teachers:

- **Have active intellectual lives outside their classrooms.**

Economists have discovered that teachers with high SAT scores or perfect college GPAs are generally no better for their students than teachers with less impressive credentials. But teachers with large vocabularies *are* better at their jobs because this trait is associated with being intelligent, well-read and curious. Great teachers often love to travel, and share their experiences with their students. Many read often and read a wide variety of books. They often have unique hobbies and interests beyond the scope of their job. This intellectual curiosity helps them to stay in tune with new ideas and helps them to improve their teaching every year.

- **Believe intelligence is achievable, not inborn.**

Effective educators reject the idea that smarts are something that only some students have; they expect **all** children to perform at high levels, even those who act out or struggle to learn. How can you tell if a teacher has high expectations? Ask your child if he or she has learned anything new today. Research suggests that most students already know almost half of what is taught in most classes. Average teachers often spend too much time reviewing basic facts and too little time introducing deeper concepts.

- **Are data-driven.**

Effective teachers are constantly assessing student learning, and make adjustments to either fill in the gaps and to keep moving forward. I've written recently about the formal assessments we use in our schools, but great teachers incorporate "formative assessments." Formative assessments are short, often informal learning checks to make sure students are learning what is being taught. Research confirms that students score higher on end-of-year exams when they have been quizzed by their teacher along the way.

- **Ask great questions.**

According to the scholar John Hattie, when teachers focus lessons on concepts that are broader than those on multiple-choice tests, children's scores on higher-level assessments—like those that require writing—*increase*. How can you identify a high-quality question in your child's schoolwork? It tests for conceptual, not factual, understanding—not "When did the Great Depression occur?" but "What economic, social and political factors led to the Great Depression?"

I believe that all of our teachers in our three schools exhibit these qualities. If you have a chance to observe your child's class, or better yet, take some time to volunteer in the classroom, I think you will see this as well.

-Mr. Shipp