

# NORTH LYON COUNTY OCTOBER 2023 PATRON NEWSLETTER

## Superintendent's Message

Dear USD 251 North Lyon County School Communities,

In April 2022 the USD 251 Board of Education approved a five-year strategic plan to guide the school district's direction and decision-making for the next few years. USD 251 is continuing to work on these four strategic directions by utilizing the District Leadership Team (DLT), Outside Visitation Team (OVT), Site Council, and Strategic Planning Committee. The four strategic directions are as follows:

- Improve Student Achievement
- Recruit, Develop, and Retain Quality Staff
- Engage and Involve all District Stakeholders
- Budget & Facilities
  - ⇒ Manage school district budget and resources effectively and efficiently.
  - ⇒ Engage the community in researching potential solutions for school district facilities (consider community listening sessions, strategic planning committee, third party study).

The District Leadership Team (DLT) is made up of teachers from each building and the administration. The main focus of the DLT is to work on Strategic Direction #1 by focusing on improving student achievement. There are five goal areas that have direct impact on producing successful high school graduates: Social-Emotional Factors, Kindergarten Readiness, Individual Plans of Study, High School Graduation, and Postsecondary Success. All of this is documented by the district and overseen by an Outside Visitation Team (OVT) comprised of expert educators from across the state. The OVT visits our school district annually in the spring to provide feedback pertaining to our district's goals. Currently, the DLT is working on finalizing the implementation of two focus goals:

1. Improve postsecondary success
2. Improve state assessment scores in math

USD 251 is continuing to emphasize the importance of Strategic Direction #2 by promoting the recruitment of the most qualified staff, ensuring that staff are assigned and used efficiently, promoting effective professional development, improving staff satisfaction, and budgeting effectively to attract the most qualified staff.

The USD 251 North Lyon County Site Council will be having their first meeting of the 2023-2024 school year on October 4<sup>th</sup>. This is a group of 24 people consisting of parents, community members, teachers, staff, and principals. During the current school year, the Site Council will be focusing its efforts on Strategic Direction #3 by assisting in the engagement and involvement of all district stakeholders.

As you know, last spring, the North Lyon County Board of Education appointed several community members to serve on the USD 251 Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee is focusing on Strategic Direction #4 by addressing potential solutions for school district facilities. Furthermore, this committee will also be engaging all district stakeholders in this process. This group is a representative cross-section of North Lyon County. The board and administration will be relying heavily on the combined expertise of this group as they engage the patrons of our school district in researching potential solutions for school district facilities. As the school resource person for the committee, I have really enjoyed meeting and getting to know everyone. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank this group for their commitment to serve in this capacity. The committee members are the following:

USD 251 Strategic Planning Committee Members:

**Kiley DeDonder**, Chair, Admire area  
**Chuck Schneickert**, Americus area  
**Lacie Hamlin**, Americus area  
**Jessica Kellison**, Americus area  
**David Orear**, Allen area  
**Cody Patton**, Americus area  
**Rich Porter**, Reading/Miller areas  
**Evan Wilson**, Americus area  
**Bill Harmon**, Americus area, recommended by Americus City Council  
**Justin Keith**, Allen area, recommended by Allen City Council  
**Chris Wisneski**, Admire area, recommended by the Admire City Council



There is still one open seat on the committee for a member from the Reading area. The board of education is still interested in appointing another member. If you are interested in serving, please feel free to contact me at 620-481-2085 or [blairb@usd251.org](mailto:blairb@usd251.org).



This month is also a great time for students and their parents to connect with our teachers to identify student success and student needs that we can address together. Please plan to participate in Parent-Teacher Conferences on Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>.

I'm excited to work with all of these groups and to support all of these processes to help North Lyon County continue to reach its full potential, so we can help our students do the same!

Respectfully,

Robert W. Blair, Superintendent

USD 251 North Lyon County

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## Fellow Patrons,

As the school year is in full gear, the strategic planning committee wanted to share with our friends and neighbors some of the behind-the-scenes discussions and opportunities the committee is evaluating in our monthly meetings. The Board of Education appointed members of our community as patrons to serve on this committee. As the Chairperson of this team of community leaders, it has been a rewarding opportunity to begin our work in formulating recommendations and ultimately provide guidance to the board of education regarding USD 251's long-term strategic plan.

We've spent thorough time touring all aspects of the facilities, discussing the most essential facility needs on both campuses, and gathering feedback from principals and teachers on building information to clearly understand the day-to-day facility challenges from their perspectives.

At the core of each challenging conversation, as a team, we are seeing encouraging opportunities to enhance community involvement and evaluate ways to engage all district stakeholders so that together, we can more clearly see and understand potential solutions to our ongoing facility challenges.

I'm proud of each committee member and their willingness to serve in this capacity, which represents so many vital parts of our diverse school district community. I encourage each of you as patrons to engage with the committee members to offer feedback and ask questions to build relationships with students, parents, families, and fellow community members.

You can review our meeting minutes and committee progress on the district website. Scan the QR Code below to view the current strategic plan.

Kiley DeDonder  
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee  
NHHS Class of '07

**SCAN ME**



# 🎃 NLC/ELC Principal Recap 🎃

We encourage parents to partner with us in their child's education. We value open communication and welcome your feedback throughout the year. Together, we can make this an exceptional school year for our students.

We are excited to see what this year will bring, and we look forward to working with all of our students and families. Let's make it a great year!

## ASSESSMENTS

Baseline testing is an essential part of the educational process. By assessing students' knowledge and skills at the beginning of the year, teachers can create a roadmap for their instructional strategies throughout the year. This testing schedule helps to identify areas where students may need additional support or challenge and assist with progress and growth monitoring.

Although the testing schedule may be full, it is important to remember that the results of these tests can have a significant impact on a student's academic trajectory. By taking the time to administer these tests, teachers can effectively meet the needs of every student in their class.

Parents and caregivers can also play an important role in supporting their children through the testing process. Assuring them that you are proud of their hard work and reminding them that these tests are important tools to help guide their learning and growth can be helpful. Additionally, setting aside time to review their progress reports with them after the testing can be helpful to understand their areas of strength and areas to improve upon in the current academic year.

Overall, although the testing schedule may be full, it is a necessary and valuable component of the educational system and plays an integral role in the progress and growth of our students.

USD 251 ASSESSMENT CALENDAR											
2023-2024											
ASSESSMENT	GRADE LEVELS	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
AIM Assessment	PreK	8/28-9/8				12/4-12/15					8/18/2023
Reading Screener - AIMSweb	K-11	8/28-9/8				12/4-12/15					4/29-5/10
Reading Diagnostics	K-11 Tier 11/111		9/5-9/15								
Math - AIMSweb	K-8	8/28-9/8				12/4-12/15					4/29-5/10
Renaissance STAR	Gr. 1-8	complete by Sept. 15									complete by May 15
MAP - Lang. Usage & Read. gr. 6-11, Math-gr. 3-11	Lang/Read-6-11, Math-3-11	Gr. 9-12: 9/6-9/15		Gr. 3-8: 9/6-9/15							4/29-5/10
KSA Interims - ELA & Math	Gr. 3-8, 10		9/19-9/30			12/4-12/15		1/30-2/10			
KSA Math & ELA	Gr. 3-8, 10									3/20-4/21	
KSA Science	Gr. 5, 8, 11									3/20-4/21	
KSA HGSS	Gr. 4, 7, 11	any time during the school year by 4/21									
DLM - ELA, Math,	Gr. 3-8, 10		9/12-12/16						2/6-4/28		
DLM Science	Gr. 5, 8, 11							2/6-4/28			
ACT	Gr. 11										
ACT WorkKeys	Gr. 11			4-Oct							
PSAT	Gr. 11			16-Oct							
Pre-ACT	Gr. 9				2-Nov						
Kansas Communities that Care Survey (KCTC)	Gr. 6, 8, 10, 12			10/23/23-11/22/23							
Wellington Index	Gr. 3-12										



Our preschool class has the opportunity to visit and participate at the Americus Township Library each week. During these visits, the students enjoy reading time as well as arts and craft projects.



It's great to hear that the new weight room is having such a positive impact on the students. Weight training is an excellent way for Junior High students to improve their overall health and fitness, as well as prepare for athletic competitions and other physical activities.



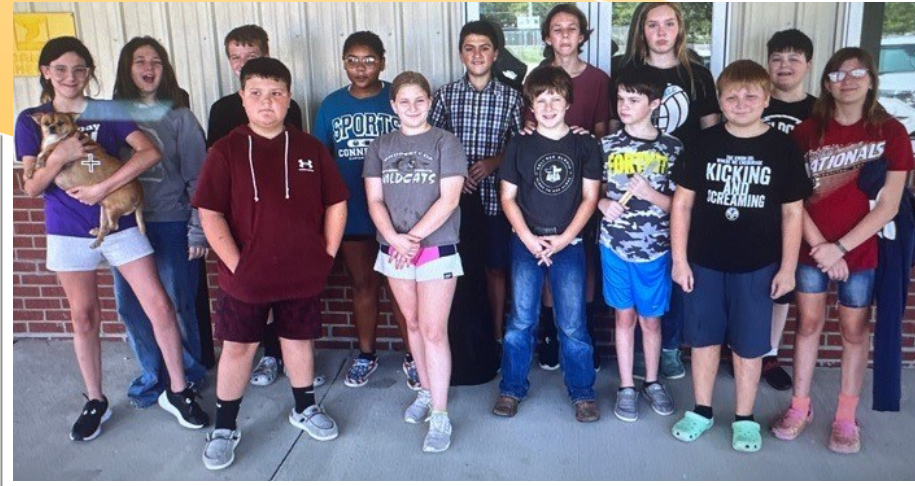
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The students in Mr. Chanley's class are enthusiastic about making a positive impact in their community and are excited to get involved. They have divided into groups and are working on planning the details of each activity. Some students are reaching out to local businesses for donations, while others are creating flyers and posters to spread the word.

The community is also rallying around the students' efforts. Many parents have volunteered to help supervise the activities, and local organizations have offered their support.

As the activities approach, the students are feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment. They understand that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference in the lives of others. This experience has not only taught them the value of community service, but also the importance of taking initiative and making a positive impact in the world around them.

Overall, the civic engagement activities organized by the Junior High Elective Class taught by Mr. Chanley are a fantastic way to kick off the school year. The students are learning important life lessons while making a positive impact in their community, and their efforts are sure to inspire others to get involved as well.



## Sports Update

It's great to see that the sports teams are off to such a good start. These accomplishments demonstrate the dedication and hard work of the student-athletes, coaches, and support staff.

Victories in football, cross country, and volleyball show that the student-athletes are putting forth their best effort to not only achieve their personal goals but also support the team goals. These successes also provide a sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire school community.



Participating in sports offers students opportunities to learn important life skills like teamwork, leadership, perseverance, sportsmanship, and goal setting among others. The dedication to practice, training, and games promote discipline and time-management skills that can carry over into many areas of their lives, including academics.

Furthermore, athletic events also serve as an excellent way for students to connect with their peers, school, and community. As these events bring people together and build excitement for the students' accomplishments, I hope that these victories can also contribute to a sense of belonging and school spirit.

I wish the teams continued success throughout their seasons and urge students and staff to show their support and encouragement for our athletes.

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Rob Hampton

NLC/ELC Principal



# Happenings at Heights

We continue to see changes at Heights as the year progresses. Some big changes involve athletics and league affiliation. Northern Heights High School and NLC will be leaving the Flint Hills League after the 2023-24 school year and moving to the Lyon County League. This was a difficult decision for our district, as the Flint Hills League has been a very good league with great individuals within the league to work with. However, the decision was made to move to LCL due to the ability to compete with schools more relative in size. To provide NHHS and NLC students better opportunities, and with the move to 8-man football, it just made more sense to be involved in a league with schools of similar demographics. We appreciate all we have worked with within the Flint Hills League and look forward to establishing new relationships with the schools of the Lyon County League.

With some handbook changes, students are adjusting to new requirements. However, students and staff have been incredibly receptive of the changes, and we are seeing quality results with some of the new academic standards. Our math and English language arts MTSS programs continue to help develop student achievement in these areas as the year progresses. Fall MAP testing has been completed, staff continue to use data to help monitor and adjust educational practices to benefit student learning.



Student Council as Regional Conferences

Students and staff have been busy as the year rolls into full swing. Student council, FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, NHS, and HOSA have been organizing and developing plans and programs for the year. Including attending various conferences and events as an extension of the classroom. We are also very excited as a few new clubs have been implemented at NHHS, as well.

## FCA – Fellowship of Christian Athletes

A nationally affiliated club that focuses on coaches/athletes and teams: engaging, equipping and empowering individuals within their communities to inspire change through the gospel. NHHS students requested the start of FCA as another avenue for student involvement and to serve students across our school and community. Although still in its infancy, turn out and interest in the club have been outstanding.



FCA Organizational Meeting



FCA "Meeting you at the pole"

## FFA



With the start of school, FFA has been busy with getting new members acquainted with the ins and outs of FFA membership. Teaching and learning about FFA, CDE's, and LDE's. Officers were involved in presenting at various conferences and presenting for FFA degrees. New members attended the FFA Greenhand conference at Prairie View. Upcoming events include: horse judging, land judging, and other competitions as we roll into November.





A club that had existed previously has been re-established. NHHS students involved in Art and even those not expressed interest in developing the club to create, involve and display student art throughout the year. Due to schedule restraints etc. some students are unable to access art classes and this club gives them an avenue to continue their creative expression in a new way.

## GAMERS CLUB

Not exactly what you would think of when you think of gaming. This club was developed to engage students in face to face communication. The gaming is not digital but "old fashion" gaming. Card games, board games and other non-digital games allowing students to interact with each other without the use of technology. In our techno world we live in, this is a great alternative for students to engage with each other without being behind a screen.



## National Honor Society



**The Wildcat Chapter of the National Honor Society** at Northern Heights High School is once again sponsoring a blood drive to help the American Red Cross. The drive will be held in the **Northern Heights High School gymnasium on Wednesday October 18, 2023 from 9 AM to 3 PM.** This year's student organizers are, Seniors Bethany DeDonder and Austin Woodrow. They are working toward earning scholarships for the donations collected. We have been fortunate to have many patrons attend our blood drive in recent years, and we hope to reach our goal once again. Students are also encouraged to donate if they are 16 or older. Students who donate can earn community service for graduation points. Students should contact Mrs. Eckert, sponsor of National Honor Society, if you have questions about this. The American Red Cross has

updated information and has changed some restrictions on who is eligible to donate. So, if you have tried in the past and were not able to donate, please check with ARC to find out if you might now be able to donate. Call the American Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 to find out if you can donate. Please call or go online to make an appointment at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and use the Sponsor code NorthernHeights, or contact our student leaders. Bethany can be reached via email at [dedonderb@usd251.org](mailto:dedonderb@usd251.org), and Austin can be reached at [woodrowa@usd251.org](mailto:woodrowa@usd251.org). Please help us with this life saving effort.



**American Red Cross**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

	Oct. 3	Volleyball @ Central Heights	Oct. 18	FFA Horse
Judging				
Oct. 4	ACT Work Keys for all Juniors	Oct. 20	Football vs. Pleasanton	
	HOSA Fall Conference	Oct. 21	Sub State Volleyball TBA	
Oct. 5	Cross Country @ Osage City		Regional Cross Country TBA	
Oct. 6	Football @ Central Heights	Oct. 24	NHHS Scholars Bowl Invite	
Oct. 10	Volleyball @ Chase County	Oct. 26	Parent Teacher Conferences	
Oct. 11	Picture re-takes / Fall Sport Pics	Oct. 27	District Football Playoff TBA	
Oct. 12	FHL League Cross Country @WF	Oct. 30	Teacher In-Service (No School)	
Oct. 13	Football @ NE Arma			
Oct. 17	Volleyball vs. Herington			

# Kindness Week at NLC October 2nd - October 6th

kindness is  
POWER



**Monday Workout Day!** We workout our problems with kindness! Dress in your best workout gear!

**Tuesday National Pink Day!** Power In Nice and Kindness! Be intentional with being kind to others! Rock some pink today!

**Wednesday You are Enough and so are others!** Wear inspirational shirts with great quotes or an outfit that makes you feel AMAZING! Being kind is AWESOME!

**Thursday Thankful Thursday!** Each student will get a thank you note to color or write and give it to someone they care about and want to thank! We are thankful for our friendships with others!

**Friday Friendship Friday-** We include everyone! Play with someone new today, try a new spot at lunch or recess and celebrate your pals!

## NLC Red Ribbon Week 2023

(October 23rd -October 25th)

*“Life is a Work of Art: Color it Drug Free”*



**Monday:** Wear bright, neon color clothes  
Draw “Drug Free or Healthy Choices” Chalk Messages on the side walk & playground

**Tuesday:** Each grade level wears a certain color  
PK - Purple      3rd - Orange      6th - Pink  
K - Blue      4th - Black      7th - Teal  
1st - Yellow      5th - White      8th - Gray  
2nd - Green

Coloring Contest (Each student is to turn in their color page to Mrs. Landgren and receive a prize)

**Wednesday:** Wear RED clothing  
Sign a Pledge Poster to make healthy choices

# **Building Information**

If you have any questions or need assistance with school related issues, they will be glad to help you. The administrator's names and school phone numbers are as follows:

**Robert W. Blair, Superintendent of Schools: (620)481-2085**

**Dave Watkins, Northern Heights High School Principal: (620)481-2087**

**Robert Hampton, NLC /ELC Principal: (620)481-2086**

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