



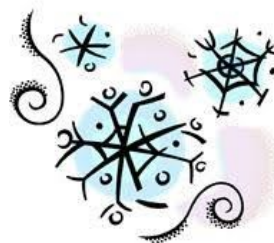
December 2024

## Based on Principal

The first quarter is deep into the books and we are already a few weeks into the 2nd quarter now, leaving us only a few weeks away from the winter break. The 1st Quarter grades were pretty good and indicate that the students are, by and large, attending school at a steady rate and are paying attention to lessons and getting their work completed and turned in with a good degree of accuracy. Grades, while interesting to look at, don't always tell the whole story though. A lot of people put a strong emphasis on grades, but the goal is not to have good grades. We want our students to learn something along the way and hopefully leave the school stronger than when they first came. Sometimes that comes with getting good grades, but there are students whose grades don't look as appealing. In many cases, these students are still making nice progress when compared to where they started. This could even include students who get a lot of Cs and Ds. That might still be an improvement from where these students once were.



There are other measurements of progress as well that don't show up in the grades necessarily, such as improved attendance, improved communication skills, having lower levels of anxiety, and learning how to self-advocate, which is a fancy way of saying these students have learned to ask for what they need when at school. For many students, these areas of growth don't typically show up on a report card. So, if you are a parent of a student whose grades weren't the greatest, take a moment to acknowledge areas of growth that, to be honest, matter just as much as the grades we often place such strong emphasis on. This is not to suggest that grades don't matter, but it is more to say that grades aren't the only measure of success that we should be looking for. Know what to watch for and make sure to praise accomplishments that are deserving of your attention. It will likely make a big difference in the lives of your children.



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### IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec. 11—Board of Directors Meeting 4:30pm
- Dec. 13—Elementary Field Trip-Wargo Nature Center
- Winter Break December 23 - January 1



## \*Based on Principal Continued-

### Colder Weather

As we are heading into the colder weather season, let's make sure to be reminded of the importance of sending our children to school dressed appropriately for the season. It is not unusual anymore, for whatever reason, to have students show up at school in a snowstorm dressed in shorts, a tee shirt, but no coat, no hat and no gloves. This is alarming. Please help your child(ren) to understand that their skin is delicate and, in certain temperatures, over-exposure to cold could cause irreversible damage to them. At a minimum, students of any age should dress in clothing that covers the arms and legs, and they should also have shoes, hikers or boots that protect their feet from snow, ice and the cold in general rather than flip flops or slides. Ideally, students will have something to cover their heads and hands, and on really cold days they should have something covering their face as well, such as a face mask or scarf. If the cold weather season begins and we still see students coming to school not dressed for wintry weather, meaning they aren't dressed safely, we will call home and ask you to get on it. We are not comfortable sending our students home without being dressed for the conditions. If you have questions about this segment, feel free to contact Mr. Kearney at the school. If it is about resources, perhaps we can help.

*Students in grades K-5 MUST have cold weather gear at the school so they can participate in recess each day as long as the temperature does not drop below zero degrees.*



### Winter Weather School Closures

It is likely that on at least one occasion this year, the school could close due to inclement weather. In most cases, school will have to close because the roads aren't safe for travel due to excessive snow or other conditions that could make the roads unsafe, such as foggy



conditions or ice from freezing rain, all of which make driving unsafe. There could be cases where the weather forecast is telling us that the conditions are expected to be bad later in the day, even when the morning commute is trouble free. I recall a time when school got canceled, but the predicted weather never actually happened. In cases like that, it is better to err on the side of caution and cancel school than to risk it and have something tragic happen.

The main reason school gets canceled is because the roads are not safe for traveling. In some cases, there are country roads that don't get plowed early enough for the buses to pass through them safely. In cases like that, school could get canceled. We might also cancel school if the temps reach dangerously low numbers. It was only a few years ago that the actual temps reached -50F...that's pretty dang cold, and certainly not safe for kids.

School is very important, but not so important that anyone should risk their safety to get there. So, even on days that school has not made the decision to close, parents should assess for themselves whether they feel it is safe enough to send their kids. On those days, parents should call the school and state that "weather" is the reason for keeping your kids home. If it is 30 degrees, sunny and no threat of inclement weather, you might have a hard time convincing us of dangerous conditions, but if the weather is questionable, we're not going to challenge your decision.

Finally, we would probably agree with you that when school gets canceled, it could be a day for kids to have fun playing in the snow. Those days can be exciting and fun because they rarely happen.

## Based on Principal Continued from page 2...

However, if after one or two of these fun snow days school continues to get canceled, you should expect that the school will declare what is commonly known as an **E-Learning Day**. That means that the teachers are going to issue some light lessons online that the students are expected to try to accomplish from home during the weather event. The reason for this is simple; the government requires that schools offer a certain number of educational hours to students each year, but if a school falls short of that expectation, the state will hold back funding. I'll agree with you if you think that sounds ridiculous...because it is. That said, I don't make those rules, but I do have to comply with them.

**On days when the weather creates a safety problem, you can find out if New Heights is going to remain open or if we will cancel for the day in the following ways:**

- We will send out **text alerts** to all families indicating the school's status for the day
- We will send an **email** to all families indicating the school's status for the day
- We will post the school's status on our **Facebook** Page
- We will post the school's status on the front page of our **website**
- We will post the school's status on the 4 main local TV news channels of **4,5,9** and **11**.

*The posts will appear once we report our decision and will be on the t.v. channels all day. You can also access this information on the websites for those specific channels.*

That is a nice array of options for you to learn about the status of New Heights on bad weather days. The final way you will know that school is closed for the day is if you find out that Stillwater Area Schools District is closing for the day, New Heights will also be closing for the day. The reason is simple. New Heights contracts with the district for busing to and from school. If the district closes, the buses

won't run, thereby forcing New Heights to close for the day also. Hopefully it won't happen this year, but if the weather threatens, at least you will know where to go to find out if school will be open or closed.

### Phones and Tech

Although the year started out fairly positively with regard to students following our expectations regarding phones and technology devices in the classroom, the gravity to use them has seemingly gotten stronger and stronger for some students, which has the staff reconsidering the expectations. At this time, we believe that it is time to move toward a much stricter policy of no devices out and visible during class time for all grades. This elevated level of expectation and enforcement will likely begin right after winter break.

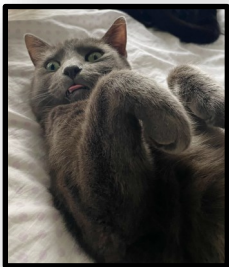
It's probably fair to say that most of our students are conducting themselves exactly as requested, but there are those who insist that they are going to use their devices regardless of school rules or expectations, and it is causing unnecessary issues and distractions during critical instruction time. I'm sure you'll agree this has to end.

The only way to get a handle on this is to ban them from class altogether. The enhanced Policy will delineate levels of consequences at different stages, including losing the phone or device- for the class period, for the day, turning them in to office each day for the full duration of school, all the way to out-of-school suspensions and possibly worse for the most egregious offenders. Whereas all of this may seem unnecessary to some, there is much at stake. Students who continue to violate the expectations not only interfere with their own opportunities to learn and grow, but also interfere with the teachers who are trying to do their jobs and teach class and also interfere with the learning opportunities of other students because of the disruptions the devices can cause. <sup>3</sup>



The issue has been heading this way for a long time, but it seems that “time” has been accelerated and the time to deal with it is coming sooner rather than later. Once the policy is in place, all parents will have access to a copy.

*Tom Kearney—Principal*



## New Staff Feature:

### MS. SARAH SHELTON – Paraprofessional

#### 1. What do you enjoy most about working with students?

- I think the best part of working with students is building meaningful relationships and helping them grow into successful and respectful adults.

#### 2. What is the most exciting thing you've ever done?

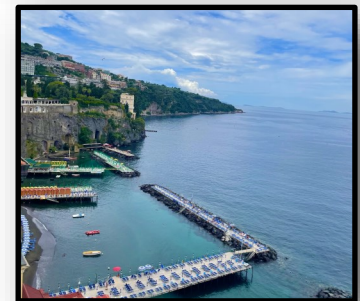
- I would say the most exciting thing I've ever done was travelling to Europe. In 2018, I visited the UK, and in 2023 I travelled around Italy.

#### 3. What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

- Something people might be surprised to know about me is that I just moved back here from Texas in August. I grew up in Stillwater, attended Stillwater High School, but did most of my secondary education at Texas A&M as well as the University of Houston.

#### 4. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

- In my free time I love to spend time with my dog, two cats, and friends and family!



#### **BREAKFAST REMINDER:**

Breakfast items will be available from **8:45am—9:00am** in the school cafeteria.

In the case of late buses only, exceptions will be made to allow students to eat.



#### **LUNCH REMINDER:**

Lunch is ordered during Homeroom each day (from 9:05am to 9:15am) each morning. **If your student will be arriving late, please call to inform the office of BOTH the late arrival and your child's lunch order for the day.**

# Recent Events at NHS

## Secondary Trip to the Minnesota History Museum

This past month, Middle School and High School students had the opportunity to visit the **Minnesota History Museum**. They have already been asking when they can go



## Culver's Night

We had a good amount of families and staff show up for Culver's night in November! It was good to see so many families out and about! Members of New Heights' Student Council helped to deliver food at Culver's to add to the funds raised for our school. In total, the event raised \$349 for the school! Thanks to all who participated!

## Food Drive for Valley Outreach

Our Elementary and Secondary students participated in a food drive to support Valley Outreach during the Holiday season. The students donated a total of 815 items, enough to fill up the bed of Mr. Kearney's pickup truck!



## Student Council Volunteers at Nursing Home

Our High School student council members went to Good Samaritan Society Nursing Home to help the elderly residents decorate cookies for Thanksgiving!



# Academic Honors for 1st Quarter



## PRINCIPAL'S AWARD

Students with an A in all 6 classes are recognized as Principal's Award Students.



**Albino Bucio** (9th Grade)

**Evelyn Schultz** (9th Grade)

**Samuel Larson** (12th Grade)

**Sadie Goff** (9th Grade)

**Kaelyn Boorman** (10th Grade)

**Ally Poppert** (12th Grade)

**Alastair Larson** (9th Grade)

**Emma Leathem** (10th Grade)

**Jocelyn Schmidt** (12th Grade)

## HONOR ROLL

Students with a Grade Point Average of 3.5 or above are recognized as students on the Honor Roll.

**Charlie Cain** (6th Grade)

**Katrina Collette** (8th Grade)

**Eloise Campbell** (11th Grade)

**Alina Collette** (6th Grade)

**Landon Stillwagon** (8th Grade)

**Brooke Hatch** (11th Grade)

**Aaliyah Francis** (6th Grade)

**Dan VanDyke** (9th Grade)

**Samuel VanDyke** (11th Grade)

**Kylah Molina** (6th Grade)

**Cheri Johnson** (10th Grade)

**Gus Campbell** (12th Grade)

**Rylin Ellison** (7th Grade)

**Andrew Benson** (11th Grade)

**Donovan Perez** (12th Grade)

**Beni Rivera** (7th Grade)

**James Schuster** (12th Grade)



## HONORABLE MENTION

Students with a Grade Point Average of between 3.0 and 3.49 and did not receive any D's or F's are recognized as deserving an Honorable Mention.

**Brecken Aldrich** (6th Grade)

**Liam Warolin** (6th Grade)

**Gloria Teske** (9th Grade)

**Cylus Brake** (6th Grade)

**Aidan Breitbarth** (7th Grade)

**Isayah Foley** (9th Grade)

**Dalila Houlberg** (6th Grade)

**Rowan Goff** (7th Grade)

**Jake Poppert** (10th Grade)

**Mya Lange** (6th Grade)

**Imarian Hearst** (7th Grade)

**Gavin Braun** (11th Grade)

**Jens Nelson** (6th Grade)

**Maks Kircher** (7th Grade)

**Alivia Johnson** (11th Grade)

**Micaiah Rosengren** (6th Grade)

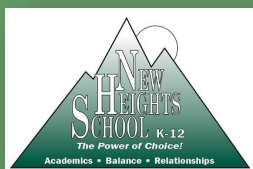
**Seleyiah Hearst** (8th Grade)

**Emily Mai** (12th Grade)


**Isabella Warolin** (6th Grade)

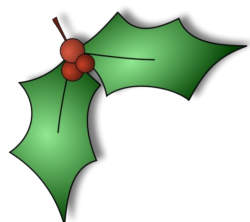
**Eli Schollmeier** (12th Grade)





# December Monthly Planner

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2	3	4	5	6	7 
8	9	10	11 <i>Board of Directors Meeting 4:30pm</i>	12	13 <i>Elementary Field Trip to Wargo Nature Center</i>	14
15 	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 	26	27	28
						
29 	30	31	1	2 School Resumes	3	4
						



**No School:** Wednesday, January 1—New Year's Day

**School resumes:** Thursday, January 2!

End of Quarter 2: January 16

**No School:** Friday, January 17 —Grading Day

**No School:** Monday, January 20—MLK Jr. Day

