Message from the Principal

Dear Parents and Friends of McMillan Magnet Center,

Hopefully you all found the holiday season to be a joyful one. We will be back to work January 7, 2014, ready for students to learn 2nd Semester. We hope the information below will help you support your student in their success.

First and foremost, the middle school years are extremely important in the preparation for high school. A research report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002) stated, "When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." We invite parents to become more involved through involvement in our Parent Teacher Organization. Although this is just one piece to helping your student, it is a piece that is important and we would like it to grow. Our next meeting will be Monday, January 13, 2014, at 6:30 pm in the McMillan Library. At this meeting, we will provide information from our Guidance Department regarding the registration process for 7th grade students returning to McMillan and 8th grade students who will be headed to high school. We will also have a representative coming from North High School to discuss the Project Lead the Way Pathway.

Thank you to our PTO Board Members and those who have volunteered recently for Parent Teacher Conference tables, McMillan Direct Fundraising efforts, and Candygram sales. The McMillan Direct Fundraiser has not proven to be as much of a success as we had wanted and we are still requesting donations. The focus for the fundraiser is to supplement Math instruction at McMillan with IPad Technology. Please visit our website at: http://www.ops.org/middle/mcmillan/ and give if you have not done so already. A little bit from everyone will make a huge difference in what we can provide all students who attend McMillan. Your student is important to you and to us... Please help by giving.

The Statewide Writing Assessment will be held Wednesday, January 22, 2013, for all students at McMillan. This test compares McMillan to all other middle schools and it is important that students put forth their best effort for their own improvement and the school’s improvement when these tests arise. The skill of writing cannot be taken for granted. As individuals, we need to be able to write in order to express ideas clearly and proficiently. High schools, colleges, and GED programs all require forms of essays, research papers, or term papers. In almost every career field or industry, written reports for clarity and concise content are necessary. And, on the personal side, writing allows for creativity and expression. No matter where you are in life, writing is a necessary skill and may be a determining factor in whether or not you are considered for a scholarship, job, or award; depending on how you write the application or resume. Please encourage your students to work hard when learning how to write and most importantly, encourage them never to give up on a skill they will always need.

We look forward to a marvelous 2014. We encourage you to learn more about McMillan by visiting, attending academic and sporting events, and viewing our website. Please respond to surveys you receive as your information is important to us in reviewing our curriculum and school practices. We cannot be a true “team” until we are all working together for the betterment of our students, our school, and our community. Thank you for all you do on a regular basis for your child and please continue to encourage your child’s attendance, participation, and improvement in their learning and growth.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeaneen Talbott

Upcoming dates:
- PTO Meeting
  Monday, January 13, 6:30-8 pm
- Martin Luther King Jr Day, No School
  Monday, January 20
- All School Writing Assessment
  Wednesday, January 22
- Magnet Open House
  Thursday, January 23, 6:00-7:30 pm
- Early dismissal
  Thursday, February 13, 11:00 am
- Parent Teacher Conferences
  Thursday, February, 13, 12:30-7:30 pm
- Teacher Work Day
  No School
  Friday, February 14
- President’s Day
  No School
  Monday, February 17
- PTO Meeting
  Monday, February 24, 6:30-8 pm
- Spring Recess
  No School
  March 10-14
- PTO Meeting
  Monday, March 31, 6:30-8 pm
Magnet Moments

On Tuesday, November 26th, a group of twenty students were able to go to the Peter Kiewit Institute on the campus of the University of Nebraska at Omaha for an entire day of Engineering. These students spent their day working in groups on a building project in which they had to work together as Engineers. With the guidance and support of current Engineering students and faculty, the students worked through problems, used the Engineering Design Process and collaborated ideas to finalize their project. Presentations of their final buildings were required at the end. Our students walked away with a great understanding of everything that goes into an Engineering project. These students also were able to tour the different Engineering labs at PKI to view the many different aspects of Engineering.

On Friday, December 13th, close to one hundred Math students had a wonderful experience! Kiewit Engineers dreamt up and implemented a group activity for our students to participate in. The objective was to design and build the tallest free-standing structure using a variety of materials, appropriately budget the cost of materials and work as a team. Students did an amazing job working together to compete in this activity. Kiewit Engineers and McMillan staff (Science, Math, and Engineering teachers) were all available for assistance and guidance. The tallest free-standing structure in the 7th grade was 59” tall and the tallest structure in the 8th grade was 66” tall. The staff also had the chance to compete in this activity, as they met with Kiewit the day before to gain knowledge as how to best help the students on Friday!

Please remember to encourage any interested current 6th grade families who you may know to call Sarah Castaños at 402-557-4521 or email sarah.castanos@ops.org for a tour of McMillan and also to attend our Magnet Open House on Thursday, January 23, 2014 from 6:00PM-7:30PM.

Spelling Bee and Geography Bee

Spelling Bee

Congratulations to Sam Ramos, who is the 2013-2014 Monarch Spelling Champ!
Congratulations to the fifty-two students who participated in this year's Monarch Spelling Bee. After a tough final match, Katryn Keesee was awarded the runner up prize, leaving Sam Ramos to wear the 2013-2014 Monarch Spelling Champion crown. Sam and Katryn will be joined at the Regional Bee on January 16th by Kathryn Burbach, India Grayson-Pattar, Chavon Hawthorne, Mario Olvera-Mays, Zoe Runge, Anna Kay Sitzman, and Jaime Sutula. Good luck at Regionals, spellers!

Geography Bee

The annual McMillan Geography Bee will be held on Tuesday, January 14, 2014. The winner of the McMillan Bee will test to qualify for the state contest at UNO on April 4, 2014. Good luck to all of the Monarch geographers!

Think Tank

Nine students attended this year's Think Tank, sponsored by the OPS Office of Gifted and Talented Education. In this creative problem solving competition, students were given the opportunity to simulate a real-life think tank, where the world’s problems are solved. Eli Alexander, Elisha Burts, Kaelynn Caldwell, Noah Crawford, India Grayson-Pattar, Maria Gurrola, Annie Hekl, Evie Kay, and Zander Townsend-Longcier represented McMillan this year.

ACT Test Prep

ACT test preparation classes will be offered in January to students registered for the February 2014 ACT test. Students registered for the February test will be contacted about options for test preparation sessions after winter break. The deadline for registration is January 10, 2014. Please contact Mrs. Figueroa for registration information.

Scholars News

Both 7th and 8th grade Scholars will take the ACT on Saturday, February 8th, 2014. In late February, students will meet to discuss their testing experience and how they can better prepare for college. The seventh grade Scholars will attend a Strengthfinders workshop at Gallup University in January and are preparing for their college campus visit to UNO in April. They will tour the UNO campus, talk with recruiting staff, and attend career planning workshops. The eighth grade Scholars will attend an Etiquette 101 workshop and fine dining lunch at Benson High in January. To better prepare for the college application process, Scholars are writing practice college scholarship application essays and will take a tour of Metro Community College in May.
The Monarch Quiz Bowl teams have experienced many successes in the last few months. The Monarchs hosted our own MindMaster tournament in October where we were runners up. McMillan teams have captured a fifth place finish at the Bryan Senior High tournament and two first place finishes at OPS quad meets this fall. The Quiz Bowl teams will into high gear again in mid February with several quad meets and tournaments on our calendar. Quiz Bowl Team members include: Max Adams, Nilah Alhejaj, Alex Bateman, Matthew Blake, Noah Crawford, Trevor Davis, Jenna Hutchinson, Evie Kay, Katryn Keesee, Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler-Hurt, Brandon LeClair, Katie Morse, Liam Murray, Isaac Regier, Ana Reiff, Jenna Reynard, Nate Rider, Parker Schmeits, Micah Sessions, Anna Kay Sitzman, Tim Williams, and Tylecia Williams.

22nd Century Future Building

The McMillan 8th grade engineering classes took part in the UNL sponsored 22nd Century Future Building competition. The students used their imagination and creativity to design a building that will be sustainable, green, and will accommodate the growing urban population. Nate Rider and Max Adams finished second in the competition with their design called “Ponte de St. Ludivicus”. They split a cash prize of $75.00. The seminar's audience favorite was “E-Residential” designed by Jamie Sutula, Kathryn Burback, and Hallie Uhlig. A great job was done by all the students!

VEX Robotics

The McMillan Vex Robotics club meets every Monday and Tuesday after school. The club is making two competition robots that will be competing in the Toss Up game. The game requires the students to built autonomous robots that can pick up bucky balls and put them into 18” goals. They will be competing against teams across Nebraska for the right to go to Nationals and World tournaments.

SAME Competition

The McMillan 8th grade engineering classes are taking part in the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) competition. The students will produce a twenty page technical paper, a fifteen minute oral presentation, create virtual and physical models of their presentation. The B4 class has decided to renovate a vacant downtown building to accommodate the overflow population at the homeless shelters. They would like to incorporate medical, mental, dental, job training and sleeping quarters at one facility. The B6 class is looking into renovating the library to allow for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) projects to be completed in the library. They would like to redesign the tables and the space to allow for project based learning. The presentations and projects will be presented at PKI building at UNO on April 3, 2014.

McMillan’s Annual 6th Grade Math Contest

On Thursday, November 7th, McMillan hosted its annual math contest for area 6th graders. This event is very special since math club members are responsible for creating, administering, and scoring the entire event. This year 212 students competed in the written Team Competition. Picotte placed 3rd, Loveland placed 2nd, and Papillion-LaVista North came in 1st. A total of 53 teams competed in the Quiz Bowl round. Papillion-LaVista North placed 3rd, Sunset 2nd, and Rockbrook placed 1st. Congratulations to all who competed; everyone who works hard in math is a winner at McMillan! A huge thank you goes out to the McMillan Math Club, Magnet Coordinator Sarah Castanos, Gifted Coordinator Liz Figueroa, and the entire McMillan Math department for organizing this event, as well as to the 6th grade math coaches and parents for sharing your young mathematicians with us.

Math News

There is never a reason to fall behind in Math at McMillan. Math Tutoring Lab is available every Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday from 2:40-3:30. Students can get help on math homework, work on your Carnegie, or play one of our many available math games. See you there!

AMC8 Competition

Each November, the American Mathematics Association hosts a classroom competition for 8th graders. At McMillan, both 7th and 8th graders compete in this event. Answer sheets are scored at UNL along with those from schools all over the state. Nathan Matya had the high score for 7th grade followed closely behind by Theron Sorensen. For 8th grade, Mitch Kellogg took first place followed closely behind by Micah Sessions. Well done gentlemen!
North High Math Olympiad

Congratulations to the McMillan math team for their outstanding achievement at the 2013 North High Math Competition. Competing for McMillan were: Annie Hekl, Cassie Jorgenson, Evie Kay, Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler, Liam Murray, Nilah Alhejaj, Micah Sessions, Theron Sorensen, Ashley Vacura, Colin Vickery, and Tylecia Williams. In the 7th grade individual event, Evie Kay placed first out of all the OPS participants. McMillan also took first place in the 8th grade individual event with Mitch Kellogg outscoring everyone in the competition. These students won ribbons, t-shirts, and graphing calculators for their accomplishments. McMillan’s 7th grade team consisting of Evie Kay, Liam Murray, Nilah Alhejaj, and Theron Sorensen placed first in the team competition and first in the Quiz Bowl round. The 8th grade team consisting of Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler, Micah Sessions, and Colin Vickery also placed first in the team competition and second in the Quiz Bowl round. In addition, both McMillan’s 7th and 8th grade teams placed first in the district for the overall competition. This was pretty much a clean sweep for McMillan! Congratulations to all the Monarchs who competed in the North High Math Competition. Way to go Mathletes!

Central High Math Olympiad

Annie Hekl, Cassie Jorgenson, Shayla Jorgenson, Evie Kay, Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler, Liam Murray, Nilah Alhejaj, Isaac Regier, Micah Sessions, Theron Sorensen, and Colin Vickery represented McMillan at the 73rd Central High Math Olympiad on Thursday, November 14th. This contest brings together the best math students in eastern Nebraska including both public and parochial schools. Mitch Kellogg and Micah Sessions placed 3rd in the Leap-Frog event. McMillan’s mixed 7th and 8th grade team consisting of Evie Kay, Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler-Hurt, Micah Sessions, and Theron Sorensen placed 9th overall out of 25 teams in the competition. Overall, McMillan finished 9th out of 25 schools who participated in the competition. Way to go Monarch mathletes!

Academic Pentathalon

The Academic Pentathlon teams are preparing for their first scrimmage on January 28th. This year’s theme is World War I and students will compete in the science, science, and essay.

Julia Dahike, D’von Doll, Liam Murray, Ana Reiff, Max Adams, Tyra Blue, Nate Figures, Jeffrey Froiland, Journey Greene-Gunter, Cassie Jorgenson, Mitch Kellogg, Nick Koehler-Hurt, Mari Peters, Sam Ramos, Zoe Runge, Anna Kay Sitzman, Hallie Uhlig, Ashley Vacura, and

Following the January scrimmage, a final team of nine students will compete in the regional competitions on February 11th and 25th. Good luck, Pentathletes!

Omaha’s 1st Annual Science Olympiad

McMillan Magnet Center will be holding Omaha’s 1st Annual Middle School Science Olympiad Tournament. The tournament will be held Saturday, January 18, 2014. Registration will begin at 8:00, with the events running from 8:30 until 11:40. Awards will be from 12:00-12:30. The testing events will have a test prepared for them in advance, so they will just need to proctor the event and grade the tests. The following is a list of events that will be possible at this tournament: Anatomy, Boomilever, Crime Busters, Disease Detectives, Dynamic Planet, Experimental Design, Heredity, Meteorology, Metric Mastery, Roto Egg Drop, Shock Value, Solar Systems, Write it Do it, Helicopters, and Water Quality, Entomology, Sounds of Music.
“Math Alive!” Field Trip at SAC

Around 100 McMillan 7th and 8th grade students had the opportunity to go to the Math Alive! exhibit at the SAC museum December 18, 2013. Students and faculty toured the hangar with a scavenger hunt activity and then ventured through the Math Alive! exhibit where they could participate in hands-on math activities. From their website: The exhibit offers visitors the chance to ride a snowboard in a 3D experience, design (and play) their own video games, capture their 360-degree images in a unique interactive, jump into a fractal dance party, and even design custom skateboards for “pop” – the quick, snapping motion that allows a board to do the best tricks.

Youth Congress

On Wednesday, November 20, Jessica Szynskie, Arumi Hernandez, Kaelynn Caldwell and J La Ervin, along with Mrs. Gonzales, attended the Omaha Public Schools Youth Congress. This was a daylong event for seventh graders focused on preventing tobacco use among teens and young adults. Various community leaders spoke with the students about the value of leading a healthy lifestyle and avoiding tobacco and other dangerous substances. Students learned facts about tobacco use, looked at the ways tobacco companies use advertisements to hook young people into smoking and ways to get the message out to the community. In addition to presentations students also participated in fun and educational teambuilding activities. During this experience students learned what it means to be advocates for drug free lifestyles and to help others to do the same. The team is in the process of planning and developing an action plan to bring their learning back to McMillan students and community.

Yearbooks and Journalism News

Yearbooks are on sale for only $20. They will arrive in May. An autograph section, photo pockets, and a clear plastic cover are also available for an additional cost. Personalized name-stamps and decorative icons are also available until January 17 for an additional cost. Order forms are available from Ms. Balentine, adviser in room 266 or any Language Arts teacher. Yearbooks can also be ordered online by going to the McMillan website and clicking on the Yearbook icon.

The newspaper staff members have completed two issues of The Prowler, the McMillan student online newspaper. The Prowler articles along with photos can be accessed by going to the McMillan website and clicking on The Prowler icon. Articles are submitted periodically; be sure to check often.

Lion’s Pride Update

The second and third sessions of Lions’ Pride have been great. New clubs have started and new students have joining the program. We are always happy for students who are looking to fun and learn in a safe place environment. As we come to the close of the semester we reflect on the wonderful opportunities students have had to learn and have fun. We also look forward to the start of the new program on 01/08/14.

Family Night—11/20/13:
Students & their families participated in an evening of music and food at the South YMCA.

Family Night—12/13/13:
Family and friends of Lions’ Pride students came to support them in their first performance of the program. The students performed line dancing & recited scenes from Macbeth. The next performance is 12/20/13 from 6:30pm - 8:00pm at McMillan.

Cub Care—02/13/14:
Lions’ Pride offers “Cub Care” during parent/ teacher conference on 02/13/14.

For more information contact Site Director DeJuan Reddick P:(402.557.4526) E: dreddick@metroymca.org
Notes from the School Nurse

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

A reminder about the OPS medication policy….medication cannot be given at school without:

- Signed Physician’s orders with the name, time and dose of the medication to be given. AND
- Signed parent permission AND
- The pharmacy labeled container matching the physician’s written order. Ask pharmacy for a dedicated medication bottle for school.

*This also includes any over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, cough drops, topical creams/lotions and cold medicine.

Students cannot carry medication on their person. If medication is needed during the school day a parent/guardian is welcome to administer the dosage to the student at school.

COLD AND FLU SEASON IS UPON US!

PLEASE…if your child is running a fever or vomiting - DO NOT SEND HIM/HER TO SCHOOL!

BABY ITS COLD OUTSIDE!

When the weather is cold, please make sure your student is dressed for the weather. We have many students coming to school ill-prepared for cold weather. Coats, hats, and gloves are necessary during cold weather and walking to and from school.

7th GRADE HEALTH SCREENINGS

7th grade screenings will begin in January and include assessing your student’s height, weight, dental, vision and hearing. If you receive a referral form after any school screening, it means that the screening detected a possible problem and further evaluation is recommended. The form is to be completed by your physician, dentist or eye doctor and returned to the school nurse. As always, if you have any questions, contact the school nurse.

Melissa Hargrave, RN BSN
School Nurse
Office: (402)557-4515
Fax: (402) 557-4514

School Improvement Plan

Our school improvement plan is called our EXCELS Plan. Within the plan, are components to increase achievement through a variety of instructional strategies. The four Goal Areas and Focus Skills attached to the plan include:

Goal Area: Reading
Focus Skill(s): Vocabulary or comprehension

Goal Area: Mathematics
Focus Skill(s): Number sense (Number System), Geometry/Measurement (Tools for Measurement), Algebra (Model in Context-Word Problems), and Data Analysis/Probability (Probability and Display), Inequalities

Goal Area: Writing
Focus Skill(s): Summarizing and Writing complete sentences

Goal Area: Culture and Climate (indicated by Climate Survey data and referral/suspension data)
Focus: Social skills, staff and student respect for self, others, and school culture

We are working very hard as a with a school-wide plan to increase achievement. We encourage you to speak to your students about the importance of improving, everyday, in every class. This focus of improvement should ensure our success when we take District and State assessments. Recently, our 8th grade students were tested on writing skills and those assessments will be graded to help students improve before the final test in January. Other current assessments include Acuity, which are given in Math and Language Arts classes. These assessments help teachers adjust instruction to individual and class needs. The Acuity assessment helps students and teachers prepare for the NeSA tests in math and reading.
McMillan Monarch Swimming

The swim season for 7th and 8th grade girls was a challenge for all of our competitors. The season stared in mid October and finished December 12, 2013. The 7th grade girls competing this year are Kaleigh Burns, Emily Francis, Katryn Keese, Tyana Moore, Ana Reiff, and Hannah Zyla. These girls showed great endurance and never gave up on themselves. The 8th grade swimmers for this season are Lydia Borelli, Jamie Sutula, Michelle Larson, Breann Throckmorton, Madeline Kane, Hallie Uhlig, Anna Sitzman, Hannah Davis, Adriana Townsell, and Ashley Vacura. What an exciting season the girls had! The 8th grade girls took Runner Up Honors finishing second to Buffet Magnet School. The girl’s work ethic was relentless and Coach Mayberger and Coach Parfitt were impressed with their determination and willingness to improve “Day By Day”.

The 7th and 8th grade boys swim team season will begin January 13, 2014. Coach Mayberger and Coach Parfitt look forward to continuing on with a winning spirit with the boy’s team.

McMillan Monarch Basketball

McMillan Boy’s A Team Basketball ended in an overtime battle against Morton Middle School. Although the boys did not end up with a victory, they improved throughout the season and became a great team. We are proud of their winning record, but more proud of their work ethic and determination. Members of the ‘A’ Team were Ronald Aultman, Elisha Burts, Michael Goodman, Gom Gout, Jalen Harris, Vernon Johnson, TyPree Starks-Matthews, John Tonje, Alex Williford, and Arlin Williford. Members of the ‘B’ Team were Ka”Ron Adkins, Jaydon Brown, Johnny Chatmon, Daejaun Elliot, Matthew Glissmann, Niko Hofsheier, Rhaland Mays, Skylar Wickwire, and Quentin Wilson.

McMillan Girl’s Basketball begins on January 13th with tryouts for the 2014 season. The season opens on January 28th with an away game at Norris Middle School. The girls will be looking to improve on several different levels this year and make a return into the city championships. All interested young ladies need to have a completed physical, contract and insurance information filled out and turned in before the deadline to participate this year. We look forward to seeing everyone next semester as we begin a new season of McMillan Basketball.

Positive Effects of Sport Participation

The positive effects of participation in interscholastic sports at the middle school level has been reported in multiple studies over the last several decades. Students participating in one or more interscholastic sports had an average grade point average of 3.15, while non-athletes had an average of 2.4, according to a study of interscholastic sports participation published in the NASSP Bulletin, the journal of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Athletes have higher grades than non-athletes even when socio-economic status, gender, age and family composition are taken into account. In addition, participation in sports requires middle school students to work as a team and be persistent in order to succeed. It also gives students access to positive role models, such as coaches and older players who can set positive examples. Middle school students tend to be sensitive to criticism, self-conscious, loyal to peers and more motivated by social factors than by academic concerns.

Winter Sports  8th Grade Open Houses

Students can continue to sign up for Boys Swimming, Girl’s Basketball and Wrestling in the school cafeteria. Students must have a current physical on file for this year and a sport contract on file indicating a student’s health insurance information with parent/guardian permission. Students should see Mr. Jones, Athletic Director, or Ms. Wisler, Athletic Secretary in the back office if there are questions regarding sport participation requirements. Tryouts will begin January 7th for the upcoming sporting events.

Burke High Tuesday, January 7
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Northwest High Magnet Thursday, January 9
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Central High Saturday, January 11
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Benson High Magnet Sunday, January 12
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
South High Magnet, January 16
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Bryan High Tuesday, January 21
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Career Center Saturday, January 25
10:00 a.m. - Noon
North High Magnet Sunday, January 26
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Omaha Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, citizenship status, or economic status in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual has been designated to address inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Superintendent of Schools, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (402-557-2001).

Las Escuelas Públicas de Omaha no discriminan basados en la raza, color, origen nacional, religión, sexo, estado civil, orientación sexual, discapacidad, edad, información genética, estado de ciudadanía, o estado económico, en sus programas, actividades y empleo, y provee acceso equitativo a los “Boy Scouts” y a otros grupos juveniles designados. La siguiente persona ha sido designada para atender estas inquietudes referentes a las pólizas de no discriminación: El Superintendente de las Escuelas, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (402-557-2001).