



Alburnett Community School District

THE PIRATE CHRONICLES

MARCH - APRIL 2024

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Superintendent's Message

Dear Alburnett School Families,

I trust this message finds you in good spirits. As we journey through the academic year, I am delighted to share some exciting updates and opportunities within our school community.

1. GoFundMe Campaign for Playground Upgrade

We have officially launched a GoFundMe campaign for the much-anticipated playground upgrade! Your support is invaluable, and we encourage you to contribute and share the campaign with friends and family through social media. Every donation, no matter the size, brings us closer to creating an enhanced and inclusive play space for our students. Our goal would be to implement this upgrade this summer and we are not there yet. Please use the following link to access the GoFundMe page: <https://gofund.me/f040a5be>

2. Lighthouse Sessions: Celebrating Excellence and Progress

We are thrilled to introduce Lighthouse Sessions—an opportunity for the Board and our community to learn more about the fantastic initiatives happening at each building within our district. These sessions will highlight the great work being done by our dedicated staff to make our already outstanding programs even more effective. Mark your calendars for the following Lighthouse Sessions:

- Middle School Lighthouse Session: February 28th
- High School Lighthouse Session: March 20th
- Elementary School Lighthouse Session: May 1st

All sessions will take place in the Alburnett Schools Auditorium, and we extend a warm invitation to everyone in the community to attend. It's a chance to witness the excellence happening within our schools and engage in conversations about the positive changes on the horizon.

3. Alburnett School Foundation Gala

Save the date of March 23rd for the Alburnett School Foundation Gala! This event, organized by the Foundation, is a crucial pillar of support for our school system. The Foundation consistently provides assistance for projects that benefit both students and teachers. Keep an eye out for ticket sales, and make plans to attend this memorable evening if possible. Your participation directly contributes to the enrichment of our educational environment.

We appreciate your ongoing support and involvement in the Alburnett School community. These initiatives are a testament to the collaborative spirit that makes our district exceptional. If you have any questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Warm regards,

Will Dible

Superintendent,
Alburnett Community School District





**A Note from
Brian Moretz**
Alburnett High School Principal

Chronic Absenteeism

Pirate Family! The high school staff is going through a deep dive of learning with Grantwood AEA staff. We have been looking at the scores from ISASP in Math and English, Post Secondary Readiness, ACT scores, and absenteeism at AHS. It has been a valuable experience and it will make our school even better in the future.

The biggest surprise to our team was the information on chronic absenteeism at Alburnett High School. The definition of absenteeism is **defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, excused or unexcused absences**. For example, a student watching the Pirates at state wrestling with their parents for three days will fall into a chronic absenteeism count. It seems odd that a student with their parents would fall into this category, but this is the regulation from the Iowa Department of Education. AHS must follow this guidance so we will look into ways to improve our chronic absenteeism data.

In looking at our chronic absenteeism data from 2023, the Alburnett High School is at 18.9% of our total student population being identified in this category. This would be 44 students out of 233 in the high school that missed 10% of the school days for the school year 2023. In comparison, the state of Iowa is at 25.6% for students missing 10% of the school days. AHS obviously wants our students in school so having 18.9% is too many students out of school.

In the future, Alburnett High School and our stakeholders will need to make adjustments to make sure we are not having chronically absent students. We will use the Iowa Department of Education for a resource along with clearly communicating with parents and students about absences. It will be a learning experience for all and we will work with you as much as possible with absences in the future.

Go Pirates!
Mr. Moretz



**A Note from
Josh Henriksen**
Alburnett Middle School Principal

At Their Peak

In sports, when talking about a season, coaches often talk about finishing strong and peaking at the right time. We want athletes to make sure they are at their best when it matters. We want them to be mentally and physically ready as playoffs begin and championships are to be won. At Alburnett Middle School, we want to take the same approach to the end of our "season" or school year. We want our students to be at their peak as we approach an important time in their academic career. In late March and early April we will begin taking our state mandated tests, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress or ISASP. This test helps us see what students know and are able to do when it comes to the standards we teach. It is important feedback for teachers, parents, and students. For teachers, it helps us adjust curriculum and planning to make sure we are teaching students the required standards in a way they understand. For parents and students, it is one measure of a student's growth and preparedness.

As we move toward ISASP time and knowing we want students to "peak" I am hoping we can work together to help students be at their best. At school, we are starting to do some ISASP practice during advisory so that students know what to expect when taking the tests. We are working especially on the writing portion as that tends to be the section that most students struggle with. We are also beginning to talk with students about their scores and set growth goals with them to help them have a more focused approach to the tests.

We need your help making sure students are in attendance in school and are getting good sleep and nutrition at home. We also need your assistance in helping them understand the importance of doing their best work and giving their best effort. If students truly give their best effort, we as a school staff, truly understand what students know and are able to do and can help support them individually or as a group with that information.

If we work together we can ensure our students are at their best at the right time and finishing strong!



**A Note from
Bailey Wright**
Alburnett Elementary Principal

Buzzing with Reading

Our elementary has been buzzing with reading this year with a new curriculum and staff working tirelessly to support all learners in their quest to read. A healthy literacy block for students includes work on decoding words, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, oral language, and writing. That's a lot to pack in! We are often asked what families can do from home to support this effort, and it comes down to this: reading with your child does wonders!

Curling up with a good book and a family member creates an enjoyment for reading that is hard to replicate here at school.

Students wanting to read establishes a foundation that our literacy instruction builds on. Even if the adult is the reader, the student is working on their oral language, comprehension, and vocabulary skills in the process. Pointing out words your child may recognize and showing students how you break down a word to find meaning can only reinforce their learning.

Our local libraries have a wide selection of books and many fun activities to get in on during a visit! With some of our families heavily involved in extracurricular activities, carving in the time to read might sound daunting. Reading can also be done on billboards, menus, programs, street signs, and books in the car.

Reading is critical to all of the things our students will grow up to do and be, and we are grateful for the partnerships with you at home to support every learner. Is your child avoiding reading? Talk with your child's teacher for some more ideas to get started!



**A Note from
Kelsey Jacobs**
Middle School Counselor

Preparation for Transition to High School from Middle School

I can't believe we are already in March! The school year has flown by.

This is the time of the year where I start working with my 8th grade students on getting ready for High School. This year I revamped the Guidance class to center around prepping for High School. During this time, students have been able to research potential careers they are interested in, learn about finances and how to make good financial decisions (needs vs. wants), reading & writing emails, utilizing google calendar and so much more.

The biggest thing we do in this class are the students' 4 year plans for High School. We use My Academic Plan to create a rough draft of their potential classes throughout their 4 years of high school. If your student has taken my class already, this hard copy should have been brought home, looked over, signed and returned to me. If your student hasn't had me yet, keep an eye out for that in the coming months! This is an exciting, but scary time for students as it is a big transition. There are a lot of different classes to pick from, like foods and baking, computer science, or even industrial tech classes. Luckily Mrs. Tull, the High School Counselor, comes to ease some minds and spends a few days with us answering any high school related questions students may have.

I am so excited to see the 8th grade students' journey through high school and to see all the good they are going to do!





**A Note from Joe Fagersten,
Genevieve Monthie, and Jesse Myers**
Instructional Strategists

Every Learner, Every Day

Reflecting back on the coach goals for our Teacher Leadership Program (Listen to learn, Use data to make decisions, and Build teacher capacity around the Four Questions) is part of our collaborative process throughout the year. This reflection process guides our work supporting teachers and students. As we think about where we are and where we want to be, there are always challenges that arise.

Overcoming different challenges sparks inquiry. Our staff has had the opportunity to learn from Ken Williams, a nationally-recognized trainer, speaker, coach and consultant in leadership and school culture. Williams challenges us to be ruthless in mission to ensure that each student meets the essential outcomes set forth in our classrooms. Every student brings a different challenge to the classroom. Our Inquiry Cycle Process is used to assist teachers in how we help every student meet the essential outcomes in our classrooms. Ken Williams brings this to light as well, fueling the inquiry cycle in overcoming the challenge of how we will get every student there. When we know what is essential, we know where we are going, and we work collaboratively to get there.

At the time of this writing, the coach team has spent 32,064 minutes across 1,185 interactions with teachers connecting and working collaboratively with teachers through the Inquiry Cycle Process. As coaches, we reflect on our essentials within our coach goals and support teachers through the Inquiry Cycle Process. We work authentically through our mission statement. We also work alongside teachers engaging in the Professional Learning Community process as they collaborate daily. When we look through the lens of what is essential and what challenges we must overcome, we ask ourselves these types of questions: What are the essential learning outcomes? Have we produced those outcomes? How are we getting every student to the outcome and possibly beyond the outcome? These questions drive collaboration and push our coaching team in meeting our goal of supporting teachers and their students. "High levels of learning" means that everyone gets to the essential learning outcome. This is ensured when we are ruthless in our collective work together.



Livestock Judging Team

Kayla Hospodarsky, *FFA Advisor*



On February 10th our livestock judging team competed at the Iowa Beef Expo Livestock Judging Contest. The contest hosted students in 4H, FFA, Junior and Senior Colleges.

Students evaluated six classes of beef cattle, two classes of hogs, one class of sheep, one class of goats, and answered questions on three classes.

Team Results:

- ★ 6th Overall FFA Team
- ★ 2nd Overall Team in Questions

Individual Results:

Riggs Martin
13th overall individual

Jaxson Martin
31st overall individual

Brady Hospodarsky
37th overall individual

Addie Sloan
63rd overall individual



ALBURNETT PTO MINUTE MEETINGS

Submitted by Beth Parilo, Secretary

The Alburnett PTO met virtually on Thursday, January 11, 2024. In attendance were Jill Hunt, president; Jen Goedken, Vice president; Jenna Dible, Ann Wilson, Ama Bartlett, and Beth Parilo, secretary.

Jill shared thank-you notes from the teacher's conference meals and a thank you to Maggie Means for making cookies.

Reading of Treasure Report: Jill shared treasure report for Alicia, all reviewed. End balance- \$20,840.21. Beth motioned to approve the report, Jen seconded. All in favor; motion carried.

Reading of the Secretary Minutes: Beth read the minutes from December meeting. Jen motioned to approve minutes, Ann seconded. All in favor; motion carried.

Old Business:

PTO has a gmail account set up, Jill to work with IT to share this. Alicia to update address on social media.

New business:

Boosterthon/Locker project has been approved by the school board. Currently, gathering three quotes from vendors and plan to proceed. PTO to donate \$17,000 toward the project and plan for \$12,000 for next year from Boosterthon. Final approval to come as quotes gathered.

Kernals game/Aburnett night plan to be June 30th. The tickets will be regularly priced with PTO to gain \$4 from each ticket sold. PTO to discuss more on how to choose students for special events at the game.

Open Discussion:

Spring parent/teacher conferences March 5th or 7th: PTO to sponsor meal for teachers. Jen motioned to approve meal and Beth seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Early out February 9th, Jill to send a sign up for PTO to bring homemade snacks for teachers.

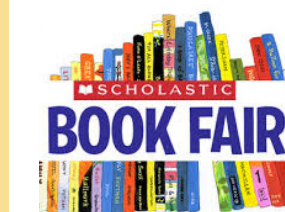
Kindergarten sign up February 20th: PTO to host table, Jena suggest plan for photo op for kindergarten to sign in.

Candy grams: PTO to supply these as a chance for parents to send a valentine to students. Ann to estimate costs for PTO approval.

Bus Driver Appreciation Day March 18th. Beth to make sign up for PTO to bring homemade snacks for drivers.

Next meeting: March 7, 2024 at 6 pm in Media Center.

Adjournment: Jen motioned to adjourn meeting; Beth seconded. All in favor; motion carried.



**Scholastic
Book Fair**
March 4-8, 2024

Congratulations!

Tri-Rivers Conference High School Honor Band

Congratulations to the following students who participated in the Tri-Rivers Conference High School Honor Band in January:

- Isabelle Graubard
- Jaquelynne Engledow
- Kaylee Jons
- Logan Borrett
- Ethan Cull
- Hannah Storbeck
- Leia Gilchrist
- Trenton Abel
- Oliver Stanley-Jones
- Zachariah Carolan
- Sofie Geistkemper
- Dominic Storbeck
- Lexi Geistkemper

Marion Honor Band

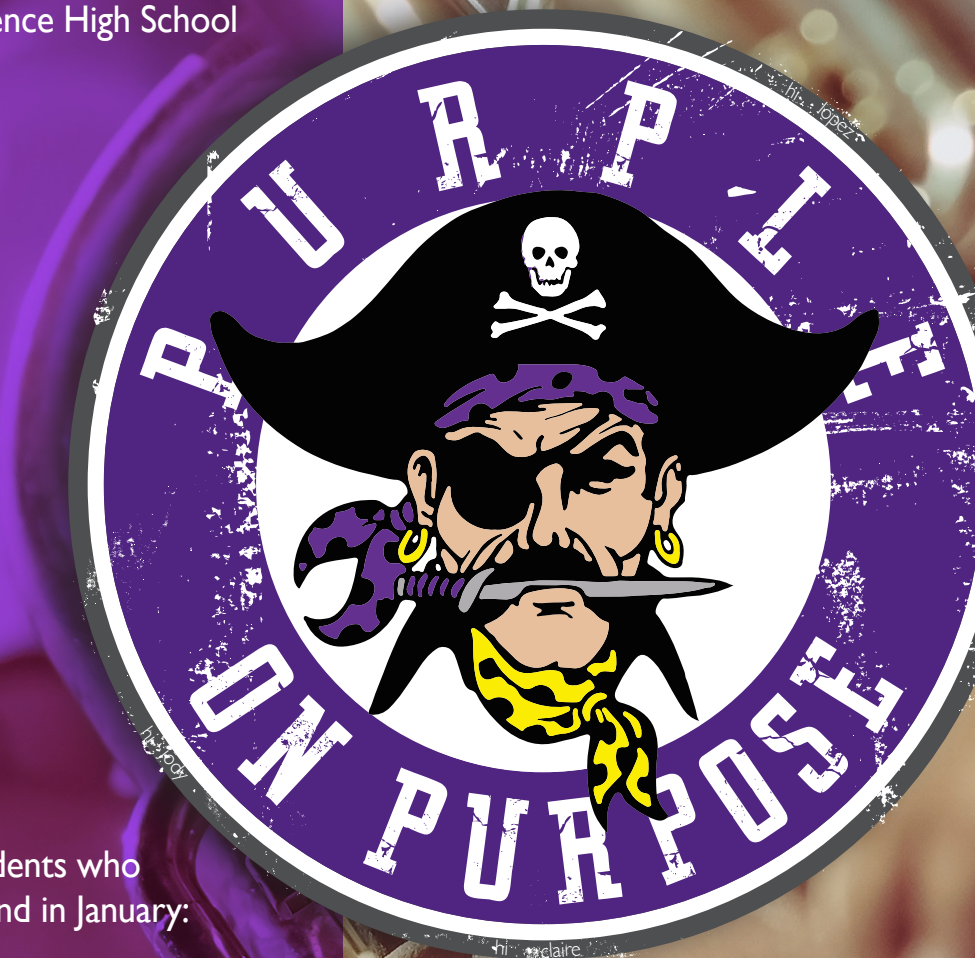
Congratulations to the following students who participated in the Marion Honor Band in January:

- Tate Gilchrist
- Evelyn Ford
- Livia Flannery
- Edyn Wieser
- Natalie Krohse

Young Musicians Honor Band

Congratulations to the following students who participated in the Young Musicians Honor Band in February:

- Viviann Rabik
- Anastasia Kendall
- Keiran Flannery
- Chloe Scott
- Levi Groen





Spring Band Performances

Matt Ehler

Band Instructor

Come join us for the performances throughout this spring!

March 1 & 2: Don't Call It 'Coffee House'

March 4: 5-8th Grade Band Concert

March 4: 6-8th Grade Choir Concert

April 25: K-2nd Grade Concert

May 2: 3-5th Grade Concert

May 6: 5-12th Grade Band Concert

May 14: 6-12th Grade Choir Concert

Alburnett Community School District

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