



FOCUS ON: *Community Partners*

Freshman Seminar Groups Lend a Hand



Whether it's community members making donations of time or money to our schools, or our own students and staff giving of their time and talents in return, we truly have a special partnership here in Neenah.

This issue of the Dialogue is dedicated to telling some of those stories and thanking those who give so much to make us proud of our schools. I hope you take the time to read how much the people of Neenah give to our schools as well as how much our students and staff give in return.

Many community members give their time to come into our classrooms to work with our students as volunteers or guest speakers. These individuals are great role models for our students. We continue to encourage students to give back to their community and hopefully many of you have benefited from their service in some way.

In addition, we have so many groups and foundations that give financially to improve our classrooms and facilities in creating the best possible learning environment. You will also read about the ways these gifts enrich the education of our students and help save our taxpayers money. So many of you also donate to scholarship funds to help our students achieve at the next level. We are forever grateful for this incredible support!

As you will read from our School Board President, Scott Thompson, our public schools in Neenah are in a great position for continued success. Much of this is because of the efforts and support of our community. Thank you to everyone for all you do in making Neenah schools successful!

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer
Superintendent of Schools

Freshman students at Neenah High School donated time, raised money, and performed several other activities to aid a variety of community organizations through Freshman Seminar classes this fall.

The Freshman Seminar program is in its third year and was designed as a way to help acclimate incoming students to Neenah High School. Each class is led by a Neenah High School teacher and several upperclass students.

One aspect of the class is to create and execute a community service project. Each of the 21 classes had a different service project during the recent fall semester.



Students in Neenah High School Freshman Seminar classes did service projects, including this group which tied and donated blankets for Children's Hospital.

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A Message From the Board President



Welcome to 2014!

There are so many wonderful things happening in our schools every day. It is truly an honor to be President of your Board of Education. Our District is the product of a community that has a passion for education, an excellent staff, and a tradition of outstanding student achievement and innovation.

Our District is positioned for continued success as we build for the future both academically and financially. We continue to have the highest ACT scores in the Fox Valley as well as many students excelling and winning championships in everything from debate to cross country.

We have paid off our long-term debt and begun funding our Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability while reducing that liability by over \$100 million. We have reduced our tax rate while at the same time lowering class sizes, adding teachers, and expanding our curriculum.

We have begun to compensate our employees based on the impact they have in the classroom and student learning. Our teachers are now being evaluated through a performance-based system and our students will be the beneficiaries.

I would encourage you to visit our schools and experience all of the great things going on in all of our schools every day and in every classroom. Go Rockets!

Scott Thompson
President, Board of Education

Thank You!

Neenah schools achieve success through many generous donors

Neenah Tomorrow Fund Already Making an Impact

In just over four short years, the Neenah Tomorrow Fund (NTF) has made a significant impact on students in the Neenah Joint School District.



Through the help of community donors and the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, the NTF has received over \$160,000 for classroom funding and support.

Donations to the NTF come in all shapes and sizes. Some donors give funding for a specific item, while others earmark it towards the District's

greatest need. Tax-deductible donations may be made by credit card through the secure "Give to NJSD" link on the District website or by simply contacting the District administrative offices.

Gifts to the NTF have ranged from classroom smartboards, computers, and library materials, to hallway TV monitors, cardio machines, and science lab equipment. Donors have also funded many family and consumer education activities and music projects.

The NTF accepts donations that can be used directly toward any specific school, academic, or co-curricular program. Donations can also be made for technology, facility, or equipment improvements.

*Kimberly-Clark,
Plexus donate to
NJSD classrooms
- page 5*

Educational Foundation of Neenah Aids Innovation in the Classroom

The Neenah Joint School District (NJSD) thanks the Educational Foundation of Neenah (EFN) for its strong support of NJSD teachers and innovative programming for students across the District. EFN's mission is to provide funds to enhance the quality, accessibility, and diversity of learning opportunities for NJSD students.

Since its inception, EFN supporters have contributed more than \$165,000 toward programming related to cultural initiatives and diversity, technology, music, literacy, math, science, arts, theater, at-risk, health and fitness, social and teen issues, family, and more. While contributing toward programming today, EFN and contributors also keep an eye on the future by developing and growing its endowment fund, now valued at over \$250,000.

"We like to give donors the option of choice in making a contribution," explained EFN President John Hovie. "Donors may choose to direct pass-through donations for full and immediate contributions to programming today, or if they don't specify donation direction, we add donations to our Community Foundation for the Fox Valley (CFFV) managed endowment fund; a percentage of which we contribute toward programming based on earnings."

Booster Clubs Help Keep Neenah Activities Program Successful

The Neenah Joint School District has one of the area's top activities programs with extensive offerings and exceptional success. However, the lifeblood of these music, drama, athletic, and academic groups are the booster clubs behind them.

Neenah has booster clubs supporting nearly every activity, allowing donors to give directly to a specific group. In addition, Girls Athletics in Neenah (GAIN) supports the high school and middle school female students, while the Neenah Music Parents help maintain the District's strong arts programs.

Many people in Neenah have seen the major projects of these clubs, ranging from new playing surfaces and floors to facility upgrades and scoreboards. However, few may realize the daily support these clubs provide. Items such as uniforms, equipment and supplies, weightroom equipment, travel bags, bus upgrades, hotel rooms, meal money, and video equipment are not all District funded and made possible by donations from the booster club.

These clubs are far more than just parents selling concessions and students doing fundraising. Many alumni, community members, and local businesses make annual donations to each of these groups to help keep Neenah's activities among the best. In addition, many booster club members give countless hours of their time attending meetings, planning activities and assisting at events to raise even more funds for the Rocket programs. Thank you for all you do!



The Neenah High School fieldhouse has been one of the primary beneficiaries of booster club funding with numerous upgrades to assist the school's athletic teams, clubs and wellness education classes.

Neenah Earns Spot on Advanced Placement District Honor Roll

For the third consecutive year, the Neenah Joint School District has been named to the Advanced Placement District Honor Roll for the performance of its students on AP exams.

The AP District Honor Roll is awarded by the College Board and recognizes efforts to open AP classroom doors to a significantly broader pool of students, while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning scores of three or higher. A total of 477 school districts in the United States and Canada earned a place on this year's list. This is the fourth year that the College Board has compiled the AP District Honor Roll.

The District Honor Roll is based on an examination of three years of AP data from 2011-13. Schools are recognized for increasing participation in AP exams by at least four percent in large-sized districts, six percent in medium-sized districts, and 11 percent in small-sized districts, and maintaining or improving the percentage of exams scoring three or higher from 2011 to 2013.

In 2013, Neenah administered its senior class a total of 638 AP tests in 22 different subjects or levels. Of the tests taken, 479 (75.1 percent) resulted in a score of three or higher on a five-point scale.

MILL RATE

Lowest in the Fox Valley

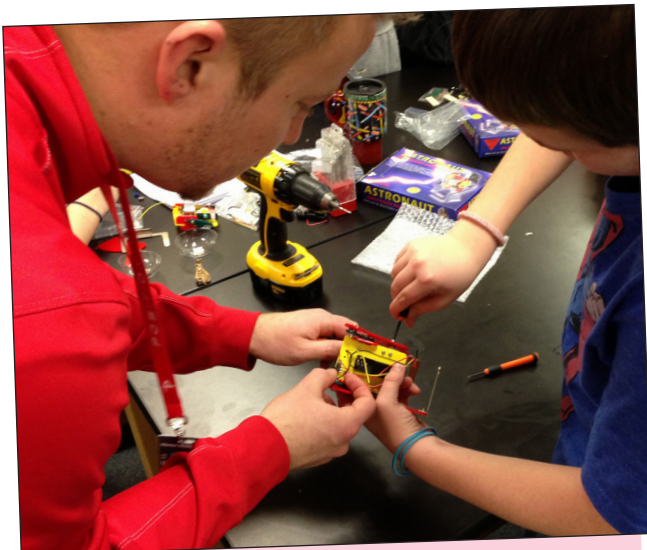
	2013-14	2012-13	Change
Neenah	8.60	8.94	-0.34
Oshkosh	9.16	8.84	+0.32
Kaukauna	9.29	9.33	-0.04
Appleton	9.40	9.32	+0.08
Fond du Lac	10.08	9.74	+0.34
Kimberly	10.34	10.52	-0.18
Menasha	10.36	9.85	+0.51

Explaining Mill Rates...

The Mill Rate refers to the tax on an assessed home that goes toward the School District. For instance, in 2013-14, Neenah School District residents pay an average \$8.60 on each \$1,000 of their assessed home. The owner of a \$150,000 home would pay approximately \$1,290 to the School District on a property tax bill.

GAINING MOMENTUM

Velocity Program Helping Shattuck Students



Shattuck Velocity teacher Kyle Popp assists a student in building a robot as part of a recent activity. The first-year program assists at-risk students at Shattuck.

The newly-created Velocity program has begun to take shape in its first year at Shattuck. The program, which consists of at-risk students and is under the direction of teacher Kyle Popp, incorporates all subjects into a regular school day in a creative fashion.

For instance, during January, the students worked on a project to build robots that covered all basic subjects. The students needed to read the directions about building the robot and prepare them for a race. Following the race, students kept statistics and did other math functions on the performance of their robot.

Students also selected one of five historical events in which their robot "participated." Possible events were the Oregon Trail, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, a Civil War battle, the Conquistadores, and the Trail of Tears. Students plotted their robot on a map traveling through the event and then wrote a paper about what their robot encountered.

"Assignments like these are great ways to incorporate lots of different concepts into one project," Popp said. "Our theme for the year is overcoming obstacles and this activity helps students see some historical perspective on what others have gone through and how they persevered."

The Educational Foundation of Neenah provided a grant to help the school purchase the robots.

Velocity students also toured Fox Valley Technical College's fabrication lab in September and learned about careers in manufacturing.

NO DEBATING IT

Neenah Students Tops at State Debate



Neenah High School senior Nathan Cho earned the Wisconsin Top Speaker Champion honor and four other students combined to take the novice title in the four-speaker policy competition at the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament Jan. 18-19 in Whitewater.

Cho (*pictured, right*) accumulated the most individual speaker points in the varsity policy division. In policy debate, speakers advocate for and against a resolution calling for policy change by the U.S. federal government. The topic remains the same for an entire year. This year's topic was whether the U.S. government should



substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico, or Venezuela.

The four-speaker policy team of first-year speakers and sophomores Alan Desai, Isaac Dorn, Brendan Steinmetz, and Raymond Werhand (*pictured, left*) posted a 7-1 record to win the novice division. In four-person debate, two students argue the affirmative and two argue the negative. Affirmative teams generally present a plan as a proposal to implement the resolution, while negative teams generally try to prove that it would be better not to do the plan.

Cho is the only senior on Neenah's 24-person team. He qualified for the National Catholic Forensic League (CFL) tournament in Chicago in May. Neenah's team is coached by Scott Thurwachter, Rebecca Rousseau, and Tim Ernst.



Neenah hosted a Special Olympics basketball tournament on Jan. 11, drawing 24 teams from throughout the area. Neenah had two teams in the event and they were joined on the bench by members of the state-ranked boys basketball team.

Basketball Seasons Heating Up

Off to its best start since its 1978 undefeated season, the Neenah boys basketball team has been heating up the cold winter season with big crowds and impressive victories.

The Rockets, under second-year head coach Scott Bork, opened the season with six wins over ranked opponents while going 10-0 in November and December. They have already clinched their 34th winning season in the 44-year history of the Fox Valley Association while contending for their first league title since 1998.

Neenah opens WIAA regional play with a home game on Fri., Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Ron Einerson Fieldhouse. The Rockets could play home again on Sat., March 1 with hopes of advancing to sectional play on March 6 in Fond du Lac and March 8 in Wausau. The state tournament will be held March 14-15 in Madison.

The Neenah girls team has also been enjoying a winning season and opens WIAA regional play on Fri., March 7 as it aims for its second straight sectional appearance. The state tournament is March 21-22 in Green Bay.

Rocket 5K Run Set for March 8

Runners and walkers are invited to get outside after a cold winter and compete in the eighth annual Rocket Blast-Off 5K run/walk on Sat., March 8 at Memorial Park in Neenah.

Registration for the event begins at 9 a.m. in the Appleblossom Drive pavilion and the race starts at 10 a.m. Online registration is also available at www.active.com. The cost is \$20 per participant through Feb. 21 and \$25 on the day of the event.

All participants in the chip-timed event receive a t-shirt and awards will be presented to the top three finishers in four age group categories. Proceeds benefit the Neenah High School track program and Special Olympics of the Fox Valley.



FOCUS ON: *Community Partners*

Freshmen Help Out

continued from front page

Five classes did activities to benefit the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. One group made cookies for the children, while another raised \$100 through gorilla grams. One class raised \$120 to go towards 15 gift boxes for the children, another tied blankets and gave them to the patients, and another showed a Halloween movie that raised money for pillowcases and dyes for the children.

Three groups assisted the Neenah Animal Shelter as one class organized a penny war that raised over \$100, while others made pet blankets and collected pet supplies. Local nursing homes benefited as one group made 150 cookies and Thanksgiving cards for patients at Peabody Manor and another decorated pumpkins and created "joy jars" as the students from both groups delivered the gifts and spent time with the elderly.

A group collected wish items for the Fox Valley Emergency Shelter, another helped at the Salvation Army soup kitchen and another collected enough canned goods and fixings for two Thanksgiving dinners that were donated to a local church. One class raked leaves for nearby residents and also conducted a food and clothing drive that collected 31 full bags of clothes.

One class had an activity that hit close to home as one of its upperclass leaders has epilepsy, so the group did a "walk for epilepsy" that raised \$100. Another class spent time with special education students at Neenah High School, playing games and organizing a Christmas party.

A class read books to students at Tullar Elementary School and another volunteered its time for the Helping Hands craft fair and book fair. One class sold "candy cane grams for cancer" to benefit Neenah fourth grader Sean Johnson.

Individuals outside of Neenah also benefited from the projects as one group wrote letters to soldiers overseas and a group raised money to save two acres of rainforest and helped raise awareness of rainforest devastation.

K-C, Plexus Contribute to NJSD Classrooms

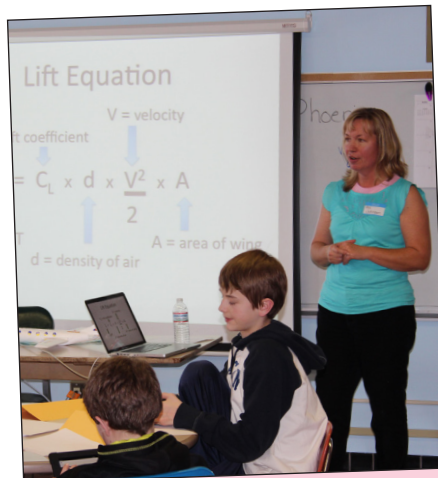
Two of Neenah's largest corporations have made generous donations to help furnish several Neenah Joint School District classrooms.

Kimberly-Clark Corporation and Plexus Corporation have both given furniture and equipment to classrooms throughout the District.

Kimberly-Clark has donated used tables, chairs, bookcases, and bulletin boards, among other items, to furnish classrooms at Neenah High School, Horace Mann Middle School, and Coolidge Elementary School. The equipment comes from Kimberly-Clark's facilities warehouse and is donated to schools when the company purchases new furniture.

Plexus has assisted Neenah High School's technical education programs with carts, racks, monitors, and electrical equipment. The company has also provided chairs, phones, toolboxes, and plenty of school supplies. All came from the company's warehouse as it moves into a new state-of-the-art facility in Neenah's Industrial Park.

"These generous contributions really open up our budgets," said Neenah Director of Facilities Andrew Thorson. "This is furniture and equipment that is in great shape and things we may not otherwise have been able to purchase. K-C and Plexus both purchase quality equipment and, in turn, we get great quality."



Arlene Johnson, an aerospace engineer at Boeing and United Technologies, was one of 38 local professionals who gave her time on Jan. 29 to help Horace Mann Middle School students learn how to apply math to a job on a daily basis as part of the school's inaugural Math in Careers Day.

District and City Team Up Against Bullying

Numerous events were held in schools throughout the Neenah Joint School District on Nov. 26 as part of "Bullying Awareness Day," which was a joint effort between the School District and the City of Neenah.

The resolution stated that the School District and city "resolve their unified commitment to the education and prevention of bullying within our communities, schools, and workplaces; exploring solutions to the problem, including cyber bullying, and offering support in raising awareness."

Schools watched videos and heard announcements about preventing bullying. Schools also held class discussions about making positive choices and encouraged students to discuss bullying at home with their parents. Many students wore blue, which is the color of the anti-bullying message, and filled out pledge sheets to keep their schools "bully-free."

School Board Approves Elementary Restructuring Plan

Beginning in the fall of 2014, Taft Elementary School will serve students through fifth grade and Washington Elementary School will reopen as an Early Learning Center following the approval of an elementary restructuring plan by the Neenah Board of Education on Dec. 17.

Since 2008, Taft had been the site of the Early Learning Center and overflow kindergarten classes from other schools. However, the new plan will reopen all 12 Taft classrooms as a regular



Taft Elementary School will re-open to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade in 2014-15. The school has hosted the Early Learning Center and overflow kindergarten classes since 2008.

kindergarten through fifth grade school. Washington has been closed since 2008 and was the previous site of the Early Learning Center.

The plan will include boundary changes for the elementary schools as well. Boundary changes will be discussed at the Board of Educa-

tion meeting on Feb. 18. The objectives of the overall plan are to accommodate students to their closest school, allow schools to use instructional space efficiently and appropriately, and continue to keep low class sizes.

“These changes achieve all of our primary objectives,” said Superintendent Mary Pfeiffer. “Best of all, we will continue to offer low class sizes, which is a top priority for our District.”

During 2013-14, Neenah has 85 kindergarten students relocated to Taft. There are also a total of 150 students who are not attending their “home” school. The new plan would assist many of those students to be able to attend a school closer to home. The new boundaries primarily affect students currently attending Hoover and Tullar Elementary Schools. Some students attending Coolidge and Wilson Elementary Schools are also affected.

The plan also helps resolve a current issue where schools are holding classes in areas that are not designated classroom areas. For instance, Coolidge has 17 classes in 16 classroom spaces, while Wilson and Tullar each have 17 classes with only 15 available class spaces. All of these schools will have the appropriate number of classes under the approved plan.

Neenah has one of the area’s lowest elementary class sizes with an average of 21.5 students per class and those numbers will be maintained. There will be slight increases to the maximum caps for each grade, but only to allow flexibility in keeping students at their “home” schools.



Neenah High School students Alex Mootz, Jordan Altekruise, Hailey Branchford, and Mitchell Harter displayed projects from the school’s Manufacturing and Engineering Academy to other districts in Wisconsin with a booth at the State Education Convention in Milwaukee.

Neenah, FVTC Partner to Offer Automotive Technical Diploma

A partnership between the Neenah Joint School District and Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) will allow Neenah High School students to earn an automotive technical diploma from FVTC following graduation.

Neenah will become the first school in the Fox Valley to partner with FVTC on this type of program. Both Neenah and FVTC staff will deliver the curriculum throughout grades 9-12 on both campuses. It will be offered through the high school curriculum for all students, assisting any student planning to attend FVTC after graduation.

Students pursuing the FVTC diploma will also need to take FVTC credit-yielding courses in college mathematics, written communications, psychology of human relations, and science principles for transportation. These courses will be offered at Neenah through the high school curriculum. The courses will also be beneficial for any student planning to attend FVTC after graduation.

“HUĀN YÍNG!” Neenah to Offer Chinese in 2014-15

Neenah will say “Huān Yíng” (welcome) to Chinese in 2014-15 as it becomes the first public school district in the Fox Valley area to offer the world’s most-spoken language. Chinese I will be offered at Shattuck Middle School and Neenah High School for the 2014-15 school year.

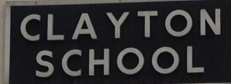
In addition, the new plan includes offering a world language course during one semester for sixth graders at Horace Mann Middle School. All incoming seventh grade students at Shattuck in the fall of 2014 will be required to take one year of a world language in either their seventh or eighth grade year.

Chinese will be added to the world language program that currently includes Spanish and French at Shattuck and the high school.



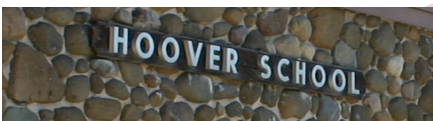
Alliance and Roosevelt students had an opportunity to learn music from a musician in residency during January. Randy Peterson concluded the program with an all-school concert. All classes met with Randy on three separate occasions. In the process, each class performed one original song on a topic or theme that the class selected. Funding for the program was provided by both parent organizations.

Clayton students were asked to bring in a favorite book to their library classes during the weeks of Jan. 27-Feb. 3. During class they added comments to their school blog telling about their book. The activity was part of Digital Learning Day where students participate in the use of technology. The blog can be viewed on the Clayton Library Resource page.



Coolidge second graders focused on one of the Coolidge expectations of being a successful student. As a group, they discussed ways second graders could be positive role models to others and decided one of the best ways they could do this was by helping others. Together, they made a list of ways they could be more giving and helpful to others in their classroom and school.

Neenah High School had 20 freshman students attend the United Way Fox Cities Teen Symposium on Feb. 4 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. The students were selected by upperclass students through their freshman seminar classes. Students learned about building advocacy, teamwork, and leadership skills, while also developing positive values and volunteer opportunities.



Hoover has a math club for the first time this school year. The club meets once per month with three students from each class. The goal is for all students to participate in the club this year. Students focus on math games such as playing fairly, taking turns, reasoning logically, being a good sport, solving problems, and following directions.

Horace Mann received a \$500 Fuel Up to Play 60 funding award and an additional \$300 Mini-Camp Grant to help them increase awareness of and access to nutrient-rich foods and physical activity opportunities for students. Horace Mann also was one of seven schools to win a trip to the Green Bay Packers' practice facility, the Don Hutson Center, for 20 students on a date to be determined.



The School Board recently voted to annex Lakeview School property from the Town of Neenah to the City of Neenah. The annexation will improve emergency response times that are currently handled by Winnebago County. It also will result in a long-term resolution to providing a crossing guard. The District will pay the city about \$77,000 in deferred assessments over 10 years.

Roosevelt held its Reading is Fundamental book giveaway on Jan. 24. All students were able to select a book to keep. Funding for this wonderful literacy-related activity was provided by a very generous anonymous donation from a former Roosevelt parent. Roosevelt students also enjoyed their annual school dance and used book sale on Feb. 7.



Shattuck entered a video into KimCentral Credit Union's anti-bullying video contest that was held in conjunction with Winnebago County CrimeStoppers. The videos were posted on KimCentral's Facebook page and the video with the most likes earned \$5,000. Neenah High School also had submissions to the contest, which concluded Jan. 15.

Spring Road students collected over \$500 worth of coins to donate to the Northeast Wisconsin Red Cross Chapter. The money will benefit the victims of the tornadoes that hit the Midwest during November. Students were also encouraged to stay active and healthy throughout winter break by playing Holiday Bingo. All students received a card and checked off activities they performed during break.



On Jan. 24, several Taft Early Childhood, Title 1 Preschool, and Phono students, along with their parents, enjoyed a story time session at the Neenah Public Library. Afterwards, students browsed through different types of books with their teachers while librarians shared with parents what the library has to offer preschoolers.

Tullar fifth graders enjoyed their own "State Fair." Each student studied a state and then presented facts about it to parents and staff members in the school gym. This year, for the first time, students also incorporated technology into their presentations by creating a presentation on their iPad or laptop to include as part of their display.



Wilson Garden Club members recently enjoyed a visit from the Appleton Westside Home Depot employees. Students worked with the Home Depot staff in creating their very own birdhouses. The employees helped the students build and paint the birdhouses, which will be placed near the school's garden area. Home Depot supplied all of the materials for the day.

Upcoming Events



410 South Commercial St.
Neenah, WI 54956
(920) 751-6800
Website: www.neenah.k12.wi.us

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POSTAL PATRON

Upcoming Events

February

- 13..... Shattuck Orchestra/Jazz Concert (O.J. Gym), 7:30 p.m.
- 15..... WIAA Wrestling Regional, 10 a.m.
- 15..... WIAA Boys Swimming Sectional, Noon
- 17..... Band-O-Rama (NHS Fieldhouse), 7 p.m.
- 19..... Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 20..... NHS Orchestra Concert (Pickard), 7:30 p.m.
- 25..... District Choir Festival (Pickard), 7 p.m.
- 26..... Parent/Teacher Conf. (Grades 6-12), 4:30-8:30 p.m.
- 27..... Parent/Teacher Conf. (Grades K-12), 12:30-8 p.m.
- 27..... Early Dismissal - All Levels (Parent/Teacher Conf.)
- 27..... NHS Student Council "Coffee House" (Cafeteria), 7 p.m.
- 28..... Parent/Teacher Conf. (Grades K-5), 7:45-11:45 a.m.
- 28..... No School - All Levels (Parent/Teacher Conf.)

March

- 1..... WIAA Boys Hockey Sectional (Tri-County Arena), 5 p.m.
- 6..... Clayton Spring Concert (Pickard), 6:30 p.m.
- 8..... Rocket Blast-Off 5K Run/Walk (Memorial Park), 10 a.m.
- 11..... Spring Road Spring Concert (Pickard), 6:30 p.m.
- 12..... Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 13-16 Middle School Musical (Pickard Auditorium)
- 18..... NHS Wind Symphony Concert (Pickard), 7:30 p.m.
- 20..... Young People's Concert (Pickard), 9:30 a.m.
- 21..... End of 3rd Quarter - Early Dismissal Grades K-8
- 24-28 No School - All Levels (Spring Recess)

April

- 8..... Rocket City Jazz Festival (Shattuck), 7:30 p.m.
- 10..... Classy Fiddles Concert (Shattuck), 7 p.m.
- 23..... Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 24-26 NHS Spring Drama (Pickard)



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@neenahschools



www.neenah.k12.wi.us

**Board of Education meetings are typically held
the first and third Tuesdays of every month at
6 p.m. at the District Administrative Building at
410 S. Commercial St.
(Check the NJSD website for complete schedule)**