

Fort Calhoun Community Schools
Box 430
Fort Calhoun, Nebraska 68023

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Fort Calhoun, NE 68023
Permit #4



District Wrestling @ Fort Calhoun February 9, 2018

School will be dismissed early, there will be no lunch and buses will run accordingly.
11:15 Elementary Dismissal
11:30 Jr-Sr High Dismissal

Volume 27 No 6

Fort Calhoun Community Schools

February 2018

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

“Even Joe DiMaggio Batted Less Than 500”

If I were batting 500 in the MLB I would be superstar, but I am not, I’m just a Superintendent trying to guess with the weatherman whether or not to have school. Hopefully, I won’t have a lot more of those decisions to make this school year and here’s hoping the weathermen start doing better. Sorry if this has been a big inconvenience for you and your family but I will always err on the side of safety. I read an article from a superintendent talking about making weather-related calls and his quote is something that I think about during this process. He said, “I would rather get 50 phone calls saying how stupid calling off school was, as opposed to the one call when I didn’t call off school saying that there was an accident. At the end of the day every decision is made on student safety and analyzing the best weather information I get. I drive the roads knowing that if me and Mean Joe Green (that’s my pickup’s name) can’t get through the roads then I can’t expect a 16 year-old to make that same drive. (Wow! I feel much better now).

In February key issues are being resolved as the board reviews the Superintendent’s contract and sets Option Enrollments limits for the 2018-19 school year. Option enrollment has been a lifeline to our District helping us raise considerable revenue for the district’s budget. Option enrollment also has helped us expand programming and offer a more robust curriculum. Included in this Dispatch is a document that I hopes help explain the many benefits the program has generated in our District not to mention the great kids that have now become “Pioneers”.

Winter is always a very busy time for our School District with all the sports going on; you have an opportunity to watch a ton of our kids represent us proudly in the many different activities during this this Winter season. The wrestlers are closing in on Districts, which we will host for the first time in over twenty years. The basketball teams are starting to wind down and are improving with each game. The Show Choir has started its competitive season and is off to a great start. Both the Band and Choir students are competing in Honor Bands and Choirs and are representing our District with high numbers of kids being selected. Even though this is a busy time, it is also a very fun time.

In closing if you ever have questions regarding the District’s operations or activities please feel free to give me a call.

Thanks and have a great month of February (for all you husbands out there don’t forget Valentines Day on the 14th). Good Luck and God Bless!

Dr. Donald Johnson
Superintendent of Schools

Visit our website for all your questions
www.fortcalhounschoools.org



- 2/9 District Wrestling @ Fort Calhoun
11:15 Elementary Dismissal
11:30 Jr-Sr High Dismissal
- 2/12 School Board Meeting
- 2/14 Parent Teacher Conferences 2-8 PM
Conferences @ Both Buildings
1:15 Dismissal Elementary
1:30 Dismissal Jr-Sr High School
- 2/15 Parent Teacher Conferences 2-8 PM
@ Elementary Building Only
1:15 Dismissal Elementary
1:30 Dismissal Jr-Sr High School
- 2/16 NO SCHOOL
- 2/21 Booster Club Meeting
- MARCH
- 3/24-25 Prom/Post Prom



Fort Calhoun **Kindergarten Roundup** is just around the corner. Our community is growing and we want to be prepared. We are counting students in our District to begin the process for 2018-19 and to determine future needs.

Residents: Please help us with our child count by reporting your children up to 18 years old, who intend to be enrolled in Fort Calhoun Schools for the upcoming school year. If you have not already notified us through the census or there has been a change in your household, call the District office at 402-468-5591 with your information. **Families will be notified by letter when Roundup is scheduled.**



SCHOOL INFORMATION
AND CLOSINGS

Fort Calhoun Schools use an automated calling system to disseminate information or to notify families of emergencies or weather-related closings. Make sure all your contact numbers are up-to-date by calling your child’s respective schools.

Mr. Jerry Green
Secondary Principal

Pick Up/Drop Off Reminder

Hello everyone, I hope your new year is off to a great start. I wanted to share some information regarding our Pick Up and Drop Off procedures.

All students should be dropped off in the west parking lot and enter through the front doors. That’s the easy part.

Picking up students has a few more details. Picking up students during the school day should always be done in the west parking lot as they exit the front doors from the office.

At the end of the school day all students who are being picked up will exit the South Doors to the south parking lot. This requires two very important pieces of information. 1. Please pull all the way up in the pickup lane so cars don’t get stacked up behind you. 2. If vehicles do get back up PLEASE pull into the parking lot and park so vehicles are not stopped on Lincoln St. Students can easily walk out to your vehicle. We have had complaints about traffic being stopped on Lincoln St. There is plenty of room in the parking lot for all the vehicles.

I would like to thank you in advance for your help with this.

MR. NICK WEMHOFF
Assistant Principal/AD

The beginning of Spring practices is just around the corner... February 26. It will be here before you know it! I would like to remind all athletes that are going out for a Spring sport that they must have a physical on file at the school prior to the first practice. That physical must have been completed after May 1st of 2017 to fulfill the requirement for this school year. When you complete your physical, please give a copy of the form to the school to put on file.

I want to take this time to encourage parents to have a conversation with your children about being active in school. I am not only talking just about sports but all activities: sports, band, choir, clubs, etc. Being involved in activities offers so much: physical exercise, workload balance, time management, responsibility, teamwork, and sportsmanship among other things.

In reference to sports, I do not doubt that we have many students who are involved in many things outside of school athletics from playing other club sports to working jobs. However, I think there is a lot to be said for playing for your high school team. There is a sense of pride that comes with wearing the jersey of our school. As a member of the team you represent more than just yourself... you represent your family name, your school and your community. It is my opinion that as a student at our school, representing our school positively is one of the best ways to contribute to our community!

What one has, one ought to use; and whatever he does, he should do with all his might.- Cicero

Special Recognition . . .

Hannah Warner was named FALL SCHOOL SCHOLAR ATHLETE for Softball by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee. She and eight other student athletes from throughout the Metro attended a luncheon in their honor.

Jordan Wear was selected as a participant in the Hastings Honor Choir and for the UNO Honor Choir.

First Semester Honor Roll was released. Those Jr-Sr High students who attained Straight A’s are: **Chandler Bendorf, Erika Bruening, Kenzie Cottle, Morgan McNew, Wylie Oliver, Tanner Skelton, Troy Teeter, Hannah Warner, Zoe Fickbohm, Nickie King, Julie Klemm, Avery McKennan, Megan Rupp, Taya Skelton, Adam Bannister, Kennedy Bradburn, Grant Hansen, Mattie Finch, Madelyn Hansen, Jayden Hunter, John McKennan, Katie Barta, Jayce Douche, Zach Faucher, Payton Pohl, Morgan Therkildsen, Carly Finch, Eva Hansen, Brianne McGovern, Riley McKennan, Regina Namuth, Kaitlin Newcomer and Alayna Prunty.**

Cameryn Lewis and **Bella Irvine** were selected for the Nebraska Middle School Honor Choir.

Tyler Curtis was crowned Conference Wrestling Champion at the Nebraska Capitol Conference Wrestling Tournament.

Ben Bonacci, Grant Hansen, Keagan Hunter, Aaron Johnson, Avery McKennan and **Lizzy Pace** were all selected by audition to participate in the Hastings College Honor Band.

PFE NEWS



The PFE raised \$977 with our annual Winter Basket Raffle. Thank you to all donators and volunteers for making our basket raffle a success! PFE recently approved funding for new basketball hoops for the elementary gym and new knee flexion/extension machines for the high school weight room. Our students will get a great deal of use out of this new equipment!

Donut with Dad: February 2nd
Morning with Mom: March 2nd
Please join your students at the elementary for a donut before they start their school day.

- Next week PFE will be hosting an Artist in Residence at the elementary school. Teaching artist, Julia Noyes, will be teaching the students about the Pointillism style of painting and will help our students create two murals that will be displayed in the school.
- Original Works Art Program will kick off February 5th at the elementary. Students will be working with their teachers to create some fabulous art. Families will then be able to order products/gifts that will showcase their child’s creativity. More information will be coming home with students later this week on both of these art projects.

PFE is in need of volunteers to make and sell desserts at the Fish Fry, on Feb 23rd, at Schwertley Hall (St John the Baptist Catholic Church). Proceeds of all dessert sales will go to the PFE. Please consider making a dessert or two! Desserts can be dropped off anytime after 10am at Schwertley Hall. Please send desserts in disposable containers if at all possible or make sure your container is clearly marked with your name.

Mark your calendars...Fort Calhoun Elementary Bounce Night at Culture Remix in Blair – March 2nd. Drop your kids off for some bouncing fun. Information, including time and price will be available soon.

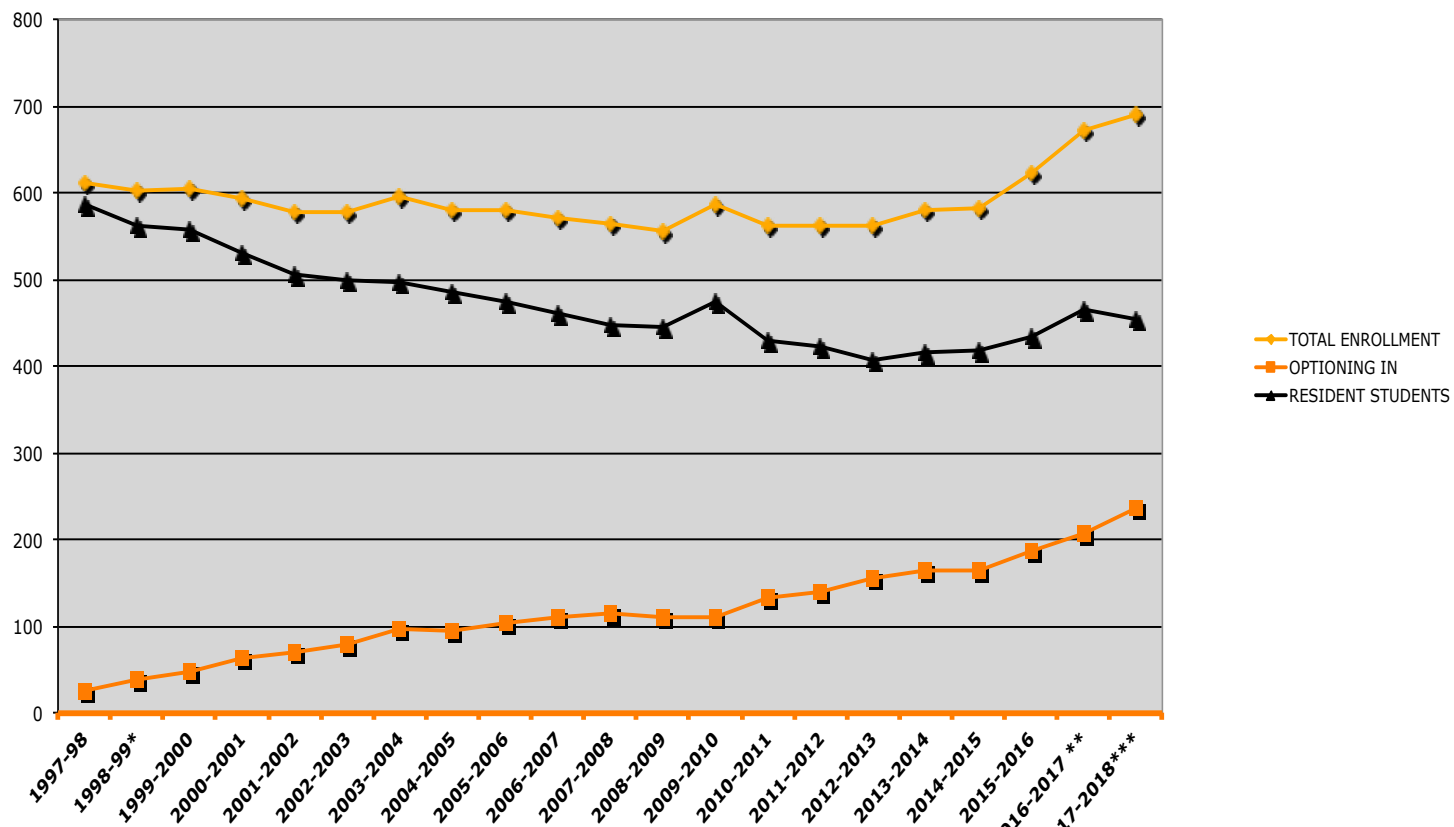
We are in need of new PFE Officers for the 2018/2019 school year. Please consider a position so that PFE can keep doing all the wonderful fundraisers/events that we do and continue to help Fort Calhoun Schools make small capital improvements for the betterment of our students and teachers. Please contact us at pioneersforeducation@gmail.com if you are interested or would like more information.

Thank you to Megan Johnson and Devon Ellis for providing childcare for our January PFE meeting. We greatly appreciate your help!

Next Meeting - March 14 @ 3:15-4:15 @ Elementary School

FEBRUARY
IS
BLACK HISTORY
MONTH





Has option enrollment had a positive impact on the District and what has that done for the District?

- Net option funding for the 2017-18 school year generated \$1,816,104 for the School District
- Option funding dollars support the basic program offerings of the District. In addition they have allowed us to add teachers back that were cut before the Levy Override and add additional teachers to expand the High School class offerings which brings us more in line with similar sized districts in this area
- The additional dollars have allowed us to improve school facilities and add much needed classroom space

If our district was to lose the \$1,816,104 in Option Enrollment, what might that look like?

We would have to select from these catagories and come up to Option Enrollment amount:

Items to be Cut	Dollar Amount
All Para-Educators and Sports & Activities	\$954,488.00
12 Teachers	\$972,111.84
11 Teachers & 1 Administrator	\$1,022,109.45
7 Teachers & Half of the Para-Educators	\$958,667.24
Capital, Computers, Half of the Paras-Educators, 4 Teachers	\$1,033,957.28
Building Fund, Capital, Half of the Para-Educators, 1 Teacher	\$1,018,135.00

-Elementary News-

Your Principal: Drew R. Wagner

Engaging + Learning + Achieving = Productive PIONEERS!

What a busy month of January it has been. The weather has not been cooperating with our school schedule. Let’s hope moving into February we see some relief in our bitter cold weather. As we are trying to get into a routine we continue to stay busy with different activities around the school. There are a few highlights we would like to share. We are starting to implement more safety protocol with the students to ensure we are keeping all safe, but ultimately have a plan if something occurs we do not anticipate. We have been working diligently to implement a new protocol to keep our students safe. Lastly, this upcoming week we will have an opportunity to have an “Artist In Schools/Residency” sponsored by our PFE. Let’s elaborate on those two items.

Safety! What an important topic for all schools. Safety is our number one priority! As part of one of the board of education goals the district has put a lot of attention to safety this school year. One of the main focuses of safety is called ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate). With this new protocol we have been meticulously implementing a plan of action with our students and staff. Our first step, at the elementary, is each classroom teacher read “I’m Not Scared...I’m Prepared!” on January 17 to their classrooms. Please ask your students on what this book entailed. We would love to see this discussion come home to further this extremely sensitive topic, but extremely real topic. Then, on January 18 we followed up with the reading of the book with an activity with the students in their classrooms. These activities will continue in each classroom as the year goes along to prepare our staff and students. Lastly, the next step this upcoming month is to implement a “Lock down” drill with the staff and students. Please if you have questions on this process don’t hesitate to contact the elementary office. We truly believe this process will maximize student and staff safety.

Finally, to end our communications we have an awesome opportunity sponsored by our fabulous PFE to bring in an “Artist In Resident” through the Nebraska Arts Council. This will be happening next week, February 5-9. The Artist in Residency program involves the entire school and consists of a curriculum-based art project developed and conducted by a teaching artist. Throughout the week, all students will work with the Artist, Julia Noyes, learning about the Pointillism style of painting and take part in the creation of two pointillism murals to be displayed in the school. We are so excited for this to happen! Please be looking around the school for these murals soon.

Thank you all for your continued support of our fabulous school. We are better because we do this together! Stay positive!

Upcoming events in February/March:

February 1: 6th grade Field Trip to the Omaha Symphony

February 2: Donuts with Dad

February 5: Jump Rope For Heart begins

February 7: Preschool Advisory Group Meeting

February 9: Early Dismissal; 11:15am

February 12: March Madness Reading Incentive begins

February 14 and 15: P/T conferences; 1:15pm dismissal

February 16: No School

February 26-March 2: Book Fair in the Library

March 2: Morning with Mom

*All dates are subject to change.

**All Fridays during the year are early outs. The Elementary will dismiss students at 1:15pm.

CREATING DISTRICT FINANCIAL STABILITY THROUGH LEVERAGING OPTION ENROLLMENT

This document is an analysis of the option enrollment question and how it impacts the District’s finances and student results.

Why did our school district aggressively pursue the Option Enrollment population?

- Declining resident student population
- To leverage the TEEOSA school funding bill to create additional revenue for district operations. Option students on average bring the district \$8,500 per student.
- To generate more dollars for building improvements
- Nebraska Senator Scheer introduced legislation in 2014 that would require schools to create an allied school system if their district enrollment was below 650 students.

School Year	Total Enrollment	Option In Students	Resident Students
1997 - 98	612	26	586
1998 - 99*	602	39	563
1999 - 2000	605	48	557
2000 - 2001	594	64	530
2001 - 2002	577	70	507
2002 -2003	578	79	499
2003 - 2004	596	98	498
2004 - 2005	581	96	485
2005 - 2006	580	105	475
2006 - 2007	572	110	462
2007 - 2008	564	116	448
2008 - 2009	556	110	446
2009 - 2010	586	111	475
2010 - 2011	562	133	429
2011 - 2012	562	139	423
2012 - 2013	562	155	407
2013 - 2014	580	165	415
2014 - 2015	583	164	419
2015 - 2016	622	188	434
2016 - 2017**	673	207	466
2017 - 2018	691	236	455

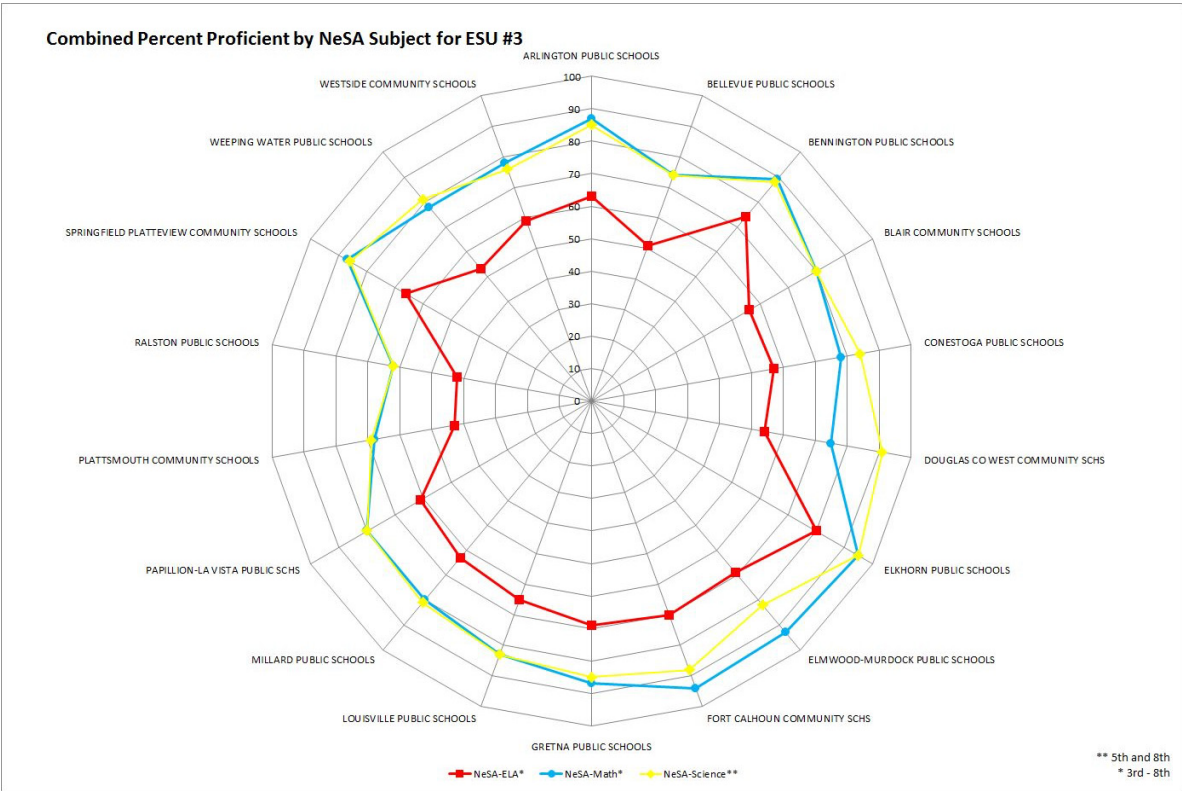
* OPS Participates fully in Option Enrollment

**Added 3rd Sixth Grade Section

All enrollment numbers are K - 12

We have some large classes in the elementary; has it effected student achievement?

- Our district test scores have not suffered because of larger classroom sizes. Our district NeSA scores within the ESU#3 remain higher than the surrounding area.
- The district has employed more Para-educators to help in the larger classrooms to ensure all needs are met.
- Through continuous improvement we monitor progress, and equip, and encourage each student to perform at their highest level. This encourages consistency but also strives for improvement in the annual test scores.



What has the district done to prevent families from abusing the residency policy to get their students into Fort Calhoun Schools?

- The district evaluated all pertinent residency policy and procedures. Through this process, we created stricter policies for proof of residency and created new forms. (Policy 5002.2 forms A&B)
- Within these policies the district added a penalty for violators of the residency policy which could include the possibility of disenrollment of the student.

Has the strategy to generate growth in resident student counts while maximizing the financial benefits of option enrollment students worked, through strict adherence to a maximum class size then filling open spots with option students?

- We have seen an increase in population over the past five years.
- We have also seen a decrease in the number of Option Enrollment openings due to classes being at capacity.
- Our plan is working as evidenced by a brisk real estate market in the District and local housing developments that are filling up, all of which generate additional property taxes which helps offset the loss of Option Enrollment dollars as those numbers decline.