



*Supporting the Needs of
High Ability Students in the
Johnston Community School
District*

2014-2015 Board Members

Our board members represent all schools within our district, as indicated below. Feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions, or to volunteer to help with any of our activities.

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Friends of Johnston ELP Newsletter Fall 2014

Don't Miss It!

BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENTING A HIGH-PERFORMING STUDENT PARENT PROGRAM

January 12, 2015

JMS Library

7:00 pm

Iowa Talented and Gifted State Conference

Johnston Schools had a strong presence at the state conference held in Des Moines October 13-14, with over twenty teachers attending. All the ELP staff as well as teachers from most buildings attended.

Each day featured a national keynote speaker, which provided teachers with information related to a topic in gifted education. Monday, Richard Cash presented on Strategies for Teaching Advanced Learners, Rigor for Secondary Students, Motivating the Gifted but Reluctant Learner, and Implementing Social and Emotional Supports. Tuesday's speaker was Rick Wormeli, who presented information regarding grading and best practice as well as inspirational and thought-provoking information on teaching in today's world.

Kathy Paul, ELP Coordinator in Johnston, spoke to parents on Monday evening regarding Motivation and Underachievement.

Teachers also had over 32 breakout session choices to attend over the two days. There were presentations on STEM opportunities, primary gifted, professional development, literacy, research, and other timely topics.

2014-2015 ELP Staff

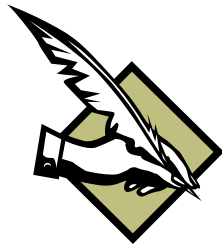
Kathy Paul	JCSD ELP Coordinator MS 8-9 ELP, Assessment, training	515-278-0476 kpaul@johnston.k12.ia.us	Easiest to contact by e-mail
Sue Cline	ELP Teacher at JHS Advanced Placement	515-278-0449 scline@johnston.k12.ia.us	Contact after 3 pm or via e-mail anytime
Mitzi Hetherton	ELP Teacher at Lawson and Timber Ridge	515-278-0478 (Lawson) 515-331-4379 (Timber Ridge) mhetherton@johnston.k12.ia.us	Contact by e-mail or Phone
Nancy McGill	Part-time ELP teacher at Beaver Creek	515-278-6228 nmcgill@johnston.k12.ia.us	Call between 3 and 4 pm or e-mail for a convenient time
Kristen Hartman	Part-time ELP Teacher at Horizon	515-986-1121 Kristen.hartman@johnston.k12.ia.us	Contact by e-mail or phone
Colleen Ites	ELP Teacher at Summit	515-986-0318 Colleen.ites@johnston.k12.ia.us	Contact by e-mail or phone
Kate Florer	Part-time ELP Teacher at Wallace	515-278-6977 Kate.florer@johnston.k12.ia.us	Contact by e-mail or phone

Letters About Literature Contest Grow Your Own Business Challenge

Letters About Literature 2015 Contest Rules and Guidelines

Letters About Literature is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. Letters are judged on state and national levels. Tens of thousands of students from across the country enter Letters About Literature each year. If you are in grades 4-12, you are eligible to enter the Letters About Literature reading and writing contest. Here are the Rules and Guidelines<<http://read.gov/documents/entry-guidelines-2014.pdf>>. Here is a Teaching Guide<<http://read.gov/documents/LAL-Teaching-Guide-REVISED.pdf>>. The Letters About Literature Teaching Guide provides activities teachers can use to guide their students through the book discussion and letter-writing process. The guide addresses the LAL teaching strategies and ways in which the program can dovetail with national standards for teaching reading and writing as well as Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Also included are worksheets for duplication and assessment checklists.

Is there a favorite book or poem that changed your life? Why not write to that author and tell him or her just how important it was? Letters About Literature, sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, encourages students to write to authors. Winners receive national recognition. The entry form can be found at: <http://read.gov/documents/entry-guidelines-2014.pdf>



Secret Millionaires Club "Grow Your Own Business" challenge for age 7-14!

The proposal must be the students new, original business idea based on a unique product and/or service. The Contest is open October 20, 2014 12:00 pm (noon) ET through January 31, 2015 12:00 pm (noon) ET For more information, visit this site: <http://smckids.com/learnandearn/>.



ELP News

Submitted by Kathy Paul, ELP Coordinator

Johnston History Day Students Attend Workshop

Over 100 Johnston students in grades 6-12 attended a workshop sponsored by and at the State Historical Society of Iowa on October 20. Colleen Ites, Sue Cline and Kathy Paul, teachers in the Extended Learning Program, accompanied the students. The workshop theme "Leadership and Legacy in History" focused on Iowa's role in Freedom Summer of 1964. Special guest included Civil Rights Activist Patti Miller who screened both her documentary related to Iowa's participation and the American Experience documentary Freedom Summer. She spoke to the students about her role in producing the documentary as well as her experiences working in Mississippi and later with Dr. Martin Luther King.

The students also met with archivists, historians, college professors, and librarians throughout the day. Johnston 8th grade student Allie Tubbs, who was a gold medal winner at National History Day in June, led a popular session. She led a session in which she performed her documentary and discussed her research and the process in which she created her project. Fellow middle school student Leah Denny said of the project: "I had no idea that Lou Hoover was so influential at the time her husband was in office. The tea meetings that she had were such a big deal, and she used that to her advantage. She invited a black woman, the wife of a Congressman, and caused a national uproar by showing people her support of what was a huge debate. I loved how Allie used her emotions to portray her character in a way that engaged the audience."



Middle School Mock Trial Competition

Johnston students competed with 47 teams in the district competition on October 29 and 30th at the downtown Des Moines Convention Center. Nine teams from the region will advance to state, and Johnston has 4 of those teams. State were held on November 17-19 at the same location and featured teams from across the state.

All teams and their coaches represented Johnston well. Teacher Kathy Paul coordinates the program. A combination of attorney and high school coaches as well as teacher Colleen Ites provided valuable assistance.



Coach: Jim Johnson
 High School Coaches: Hailey A., Sami S., Eilidh C., Maddie G., Sydney Hedgepeth
 Team Parent: Ben Liang
 L to R: Akshaya K., Rachel V., Taylor S., Brooklyn D., Jackie L., Zach A., Joe A., Karson L., Charlie P.



Coaches: Neil Barrick, Laura Mommsen
 High School Coaches: Jessie L., Justin H., Addi S., Sheyna N.,
 Team Parent: Kasi Koehler
 L to R: Madison D., Matthew D., Jaxon K., Mark L.,
 Marshawn G. Prithvi J., Keyshawn G., Sam D., Anna J.



Coach: PA Henrichsen
 High School Coaches: Carly C., Annika S., Meredith C., Kathryn I., Bobby B.
 Team Parent: Tej Dhawan
 Back, L to R: Anjali D., Kenzie S., Obsee A., Macy T., Will H.
 Front, L to R: Gary L., George L., Sloan M., Grace C.



Coach: Greg Hapgood
 High School Coaches: Julia C., Isabelle T., Morgan B., Lauren M.,
 Becca M., Peter B.
 Team Parent: Heather Boeschen
 Back, L to R: Mikayla B., Katelyn W., Sophie V., Sloane W., Jenn F.
 Front, L to R: Lydia T., Abby Kate B., Lauren G., Kate H., Kennedy O.



Coach: Jon Tack
 High School Coaches: Caroline A., Cierra W., McKenna R.,
 Kathryn P., Megan H.
 Team Parent: Kathy Aldrich
 Back, L to R: Angela C., Dain T., Logan H., Noah J., Marianne A.,
 Allie T., Lauren F., Chris Y., Aline T., Dana T.

Middle School Mock Trial Competition

DISTRICT OUTSTANDING ATTORNEY & WITNESS

Outstanding Attorney Awards

Allie Tubbs	Sloane Meader
Jordan Boge	Macy Thompson
Jack Lucas	Matthew Ding
Marianne Aldrich	Anna Janni
Aline Teixeira	Madison Dunn
Logan Haller	Jackie Liang
Katelyn Winkler	Taylor Siebert
Lauren Gabby	
Abby Kate Boeschen	
Kate Hapgood	

Outstanding Witness Awards

Will Henrichsen
 Lauren Fergus
 Lydia Thomasee
 Kennedy Ortmeier
 Sam Dolde
 Jaxon Koehler

Outstanding Witness AND Attorney Awards

Grace Campidilli
 Anjali Dhawan
 Angela Cai
 Allie Tubbs
 Akshaya Kumar



8th place—Team Dragon

STATE WINNERS



12th place—Team Purple



State Level Winner—Attorney & Witness—Ally T.
 State Level Winner—Witness: Gary L. , Kennedy O.



State Level Winner—Attorney: Macy T.

News from Johnston Elementary Schools

Submitted by Mitzi Hetheron, Nancy McGill, Kristen Hartman, Kate Florer

JUST A FEW OF THE HAPPENINGS IN THE ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS...

Enrichment in the elementary buildings starts when the school year begins. Classroom teachers are in the forefront starting day one, educating and enriching all children who have academic needs. This involves differentiating the curriculum in various ways. The ELP staff assists by collaborating ideas, helping tier lessons, suggesting advanced resources, etc.

There comes a point when classroom teachers want to begin pullout sessions with small groups of students who need more than what can be provided in the classroom. ELP pullout sessions have been up and running as early as the second week of school. Other times, classroom teachers prefer to wait until after initial testing and benchmarking. ELP teachers are ready to begin when given the green light!

If you were to walk through the elementary ELP classroom today, you would see students in all grades actively engaged in learning. Not all elementary ELP programs do the exact same things. We tailor our activities to what the classroom teacher feels would be most beneficial at a given time. This varies from building to building, and even from teacher to teacher within each building. Here are just a few of the things happening so far this school year:

KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE

- Some ELP teachers go into the regular classroom to present whole group, critical thinking activities in kindergarten and 1st grade. These activities create a window for us to see the ways our youngest learners are thinking. One of the earliest activities is a Draw Start in which students complete a drawing that has been started for them. A second task requires students to complete the patterns that have been started for them. All students can be successful with these activities, but a few really step “outside the box” and see things no one else is seeing.
- A small group of 1st graders are learning about some specific types of thinking. We have been studying deductive thinking with *Dudley the Detective*, where we look at various clues to find one and only one right answer. 1st graders are sometimes finding the work to be pretty easy, but are surprised at how hard it can be too!

SECOND GRADE

- Some 2nd graders have been participating in a Family Language study, exploring words parents and grandparents have had to learn as they have gotten older; words they have picked up from their travels, and words that are meaningful from books and music. Students are eager to present their findings in a Powerpoint to their classmates.
- Some 2nd graders have been working on Perplexors and Logic Elimination Grids using convergent/deductive thinking. Some are solving Coin Clue puzzles as an extension to the classroom money unit.

THIRD GRADE

- 3rd grade begins the Michael Clay Thompson Advanced Language Curriculum in the district. So far this trimester, students have explored the Latin stems found in many of our words today. They have experienced the excitement of mastering grammar, thinking about our language in four parts. Here are few similes Lawson students have written using their Latin stems of the week:

“An **EX**plosion is like a balloon pop because everything

Stem story

“**EX** went out of the building and saw **SUB** under an arch. Suddenly **SUPER** jumped over **EX**.” —Landan B.

Stem story

RE was running out of the woods yelling, “Oh no! Oh no!”

“What’s going on **RE**?” **PRE** asked first.

“Look,” said **SPEC** “a storm!”

First **PRE** dashed inside. **SUB** quickly burrowed underground and **EX** stayed outside because he liked the rain.

Then **PORT** carried **SPEC** inside. **POST** was last and **DE** went with **SUB**. **SUPER** held an umbrella over her head.

Then **PORT** carried **EX** inside. Then it rained hard.—*Jackson L.*

News from Johnston Elementary Schools

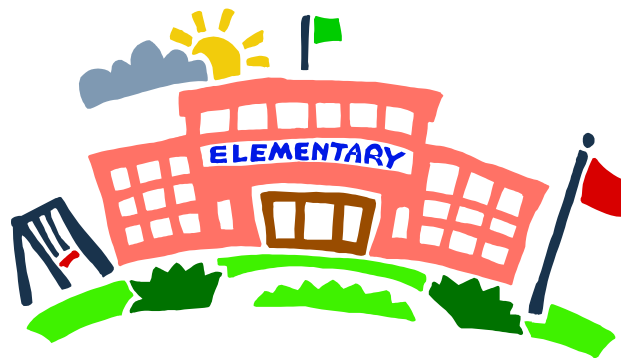
Submitted by Mitzi Hetheron, Nancy McGill, Kristen Hartman, Kate Florer

THIRD GRADE

- A small group of third graders have been focusing on algebraic thinking by studying patterns: how they change, how they can be extended or repeated and how they grow. They then moved beyond to the organization and analysis of patterns so they can develop generalizations about the mathematical relationships. Eventually they will be creating their own patterns and generalizing a rule about the patterns. This will require a much higher level of thinking! Students have been focusing on communicating their thinking in a way that makes sense to the reader. They are trying hard to write and talk like mathematicians would!
- You will see some 3rd graders solving math problems using Try-A-Tiles, Math Path Puzzles, Perplexors, and even creating their own measurement riddles.

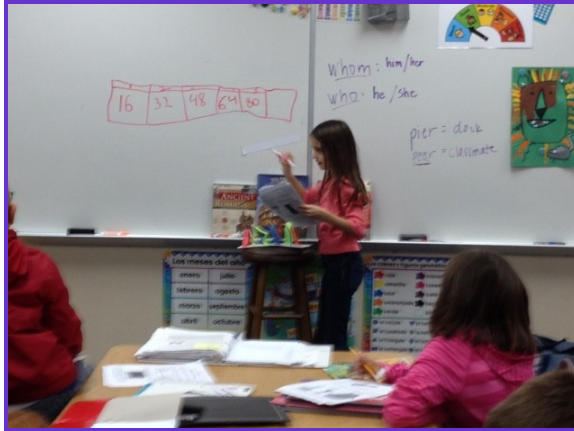
FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE

- Michael Clay Thompson advanced language continues for 4th and 5th graders, each year adds on depth and intensity.
- Math Olympiad is a weekly problem-solving group not for the faint of heart. It pushes students to solve problems using multiple steps and multiple strategies. The program allows for students to monitor their own learning by offering four levels of challenge—Levels 1, 2, & 3, and of course, Einstein Level! Each week students are encouraged to push themselves to the level they feel uncomfortable, but can still be successful. After weeks of practice, the students took their first test on Nov 18!
- Some 5th graders have been enjoying a complex novel about words and numbers entitled *Lost in Lexicon* by Pendred Noyce. They are enjoying the introduction to a wealth of ideas including the coordinate plane, meter and rhythm in poetry, syllogisms, tessellations, irrational numbers, characterization, theme and conflict, metaphor and similes, and so much more! They have been hard at work learning to blog and creating original work, practicing active reading, and practicing our punctuation skills. They are nearly finished reading and hope to have time to choose a topic to explore in greater detail and create a project about that investigation.
- Another group of 5th graders are exploring Main Idea and strong character development in *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmidt and *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick.
- Some 4th graders are reading the classic novel, *Wind in the Willows*. After adapting our thinking to Kenneth Graham's style of writing, which is so different from the usual novels read, students have been able to comprehend and enjoy the deeper themes and messages of the text. They are excited to discover the variations in the movie versions.
- Another group of 4th graders are reading a mystery novel about a famous artist, *Chasing Vermeer*, by Blue Balliett.
- A small group of 4th graders are extending their studies of the human body with a STEMS unit on Biomedical Engineering. Students are working in teams, using the engineering design process to create or improve a brace for an injured knee.



News from Johnston Elementary Schools

Submitted by Mitzi Hetheron, Nancy McGill, Kristen Hartman, Kate Florer



Bridget L., Wallace 3rd grader, solving and explaining a math problem



3rd graders at BC learned that adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. So, if one sees "the pursnookityspiff" in a book, it means that pursnookityspiff is a noun and therefore must be a person, place, thing, animal, idea or emotion. Each created their vision of what a "pursnookityspiff" looks like.

L to R: Maeve R. and "Reeka"; Ben C. and "Bagooze"; Jacob J. and "Snob"; Abby W. and "Snooky"; Anthony W. and "Bobby"; Reagan Z. and "Cooku Guy"; and laying in front, Leah S. and "Tootzie."



4th grade STEMs class at Timber Ridge. Students are designing a knee brace for an injured knee while studying biomedical engineering. Students are following the Engineering Design Process: Ask, Imagine, Plan, Create, and Improve to develop a brace that is usable, durable and allows for appropriate range of motion.

Clockwise from top: Sophie & Adam; Meredith & Alex; James & Aidan



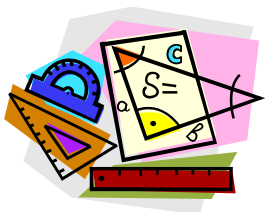
STEM tree created by Horizon 3rd graders

Summit Middle School News

Submitted by Colleen Ites, ELP Teacher

6TH GRADE STEM

Students have been hard at work studying the interactivity between math and art in their first twelve weeks of the school year. This class followed the flipped principle, where students reviewed new content via a blog online,



discussed this new knowledge with each other, and then shared out reflections on this information whole class in person. Students had previously studied chosen great works of art and created art analyses of these works. To complete this course students have created tessellations, fractals, dissections, and the use of geometry generators online, and are now utilizing their knowledge of geometry and trigonometry to create origami and kirigami. Examples of their work will be on display in the school for the remainder of the year.

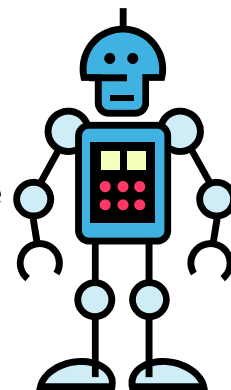
6TH GRADE HUMANITIES

Two sections of Public Address have studied the elements of good public speaking in both speech contest entries and Mock Trial. Students have learned the importance of blocking (physical space on stage / in court), how to utilize silence in a public address, and the importance of word choice and diction based on content. When learning about Mock Trial students discovered how to utilize witness statements to develop a witness, direct exam, and cross exam in a trial, as well as how to develop a theme for open & closing statements. Students argued the State of Iowa v. Jordan Archer case as a culmination of the Public Address.

7TH GRADE STEM

Students in architecture and engineering researched topics in architecture that interested them and created a 3-4 mini-lesson that they then taught their classroom peers. In small groups students are developing a solution to a world problem that utilizes elements of architecture or engineering, learned how to create a concept drawing, and how to design an element of their creation to scale. Student constructions are made from found objects including those items from their recycling bins at home.

Students in LEGO Robotics are completing their engineering team robot prototypes for a lunar mining colony taking into account contingencies given by their client / grant application as well as watching overall weight for transport from Earth. Students will start communicating via Skype with members of the ISU Lunabotics Lab to discuss how real robot prototypes for lunar mining are designed, tested, and built. Students will also meet these Lunabotics Lab members when they visit ISU for the College of Mechanical Engineering Design Expo in April.



7TH GRADE HUMANITIES

Students in Mock Trial have been hard at work preparing for the Regional Contest. Teams Firestorm and J-Town had an excellent showing at Regionals, and Team J-Town will be moving on to the State Competition in November (see other information in newsletter for further details).

Students in Speech & Debate have studied effective speech contest techniques for a variety of entries and have developed and presented their own chosen entry, including duo interpretation and original oratory. Students were video taped performing their pieces and have been given the option of participating in a Middle School Paradigm at Lincoln High School in May.

News from Johnston Middle School

Submitted by Kathy Paul, ELP Coordinator

MIDDLE SCHOOL ELP HAPPENINGS

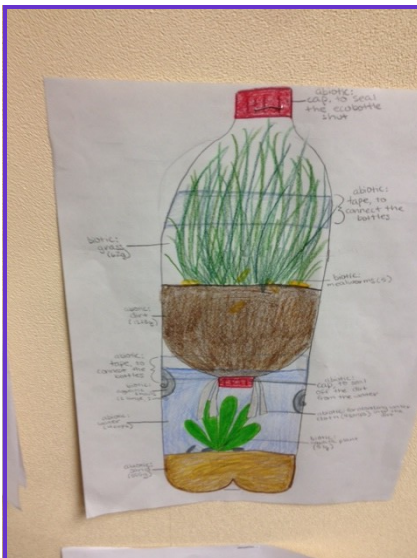
JMS has many academic opportunities for students. Here are some academic highlights for the 8th and 9th graders:

MATH encompasses everything from pre-algebra to Algebra II-Trigonometry. It has been exciting to have all of these levels now offered in our middle school building. Mrs. Parsons is enjoying having some of her former Summit students again in her advanced classes. Mrs. Sersland sponsors the MATH COUNTS competition for 8th graders and Mrs. Probst at the HS sponsors a math club for all interested 9-12th graders.

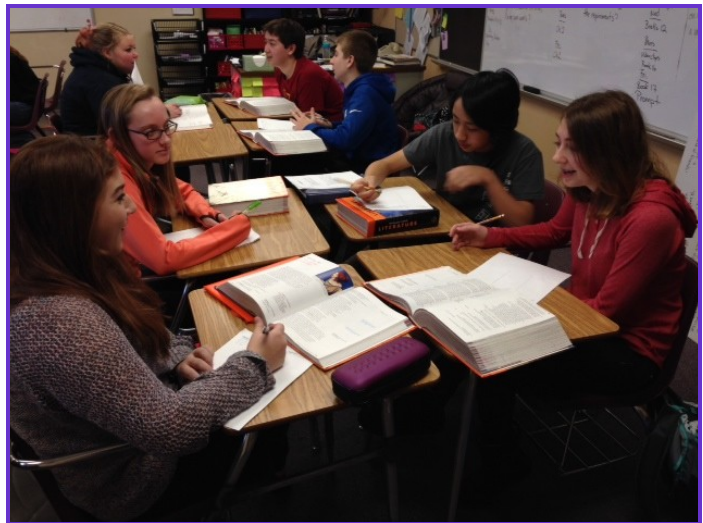
LANGUAGE ARTS classes have clusters of students who are high achievers in that area. Mrs. Hadzic in 9th grade is working with those who are interested in a more advanced pace. Students have completed a media study using events of 9-11 and a debate unit, where research and oral analysis were emphasized. They are currently working on *The Odyssey*. Interested students in 9th grade have been researching HISTORY DAY topics and have opportunities to meet with me regularly during library time. They have been to the Drake Library also. Eighth graders have read the book *The Outsiders* and are learning more about in depth discussions and analysis in their writing. Some students are also reading and writing poetry as well as sharing their writing with others. Eighth graders just started a HISTORY DAY pullout during 6th hour Character Development Class in December.

SCIENCE classes range from Advanced Science in 8th grade to Biology in 9th grade. Mrs. Horsch and Mrs. Herzman sponsor Science Olympiad and students are hard at work on this afterschool STEM program.

This year, the entire staff is continues work with differentiation as part of our on-going professional development component. I have presented several workshops to teachers and many take advantage of our professional library with books on differentiation, including one just purchased by JELP. The Teacher Leaders in our building meet regularly with those who need support in working with advanced learners.



Student sketch for biology class



Cluster Language Arts class working on *The Odyssey*.

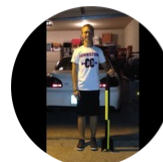
News from JHS

Submitted by Sue Cline, ELP Teacher

ELP CLASS NEWS

ELP class has experienced some exciting activity in the last couple of weeks, as students have compared their current progress to the rubrics they created for their work. This process always leads to some positive feelings about the progress that's been made, balanced with a realistic "grounding" of how far there is to go.

The biggest news of the class was the success of Bryan Friestad's search for funding for his project, a refuelable 10 foot rocket. Approximately \$750 was needed for components, so Bryan advertised his plan through Kickstarter, a crowd-sourcing website. On this type of website, people advertise what they wish to accomplish, and then friends and strangers can pledge money to help fund the project. Forty days are allotted to reach the desired amount of money, and if the goal is not met, all funds return to the investors and the project is considered "dead". The ELP classes all watched as Bryan neared the cut-off day, wondering if he would meet his goal and be able to actually build the structure. We were thrilled to see Bryan's project reach full funding about 8 hours before the final deadline. Now, we will all get to vicariously enjoy the construction of the Johnston Mark II!



Bryan Friestad

Johnston, IA

Hi, my name is Bryan Friestad. I am a Junior at Johnston Senior High School in Iowa. I enjoy designing and building things as well as creating and playing video games. Take a look at some of my projects!

Since the Kickstarter funding procedure was successful, it gives me hope that some other students may be able to pursue more costly projects. In addition to the funding, the networking opportunities will be a benefit in some cases. One of Bryan's funders is actually a rocket technician, so Bryan has access to advice and the benefit of others' experiences in addition to their financial support. The website requires a business account to process funds, and uses the Amazon system to collect donations, so it is a little more controlled than a basic eBay or PayPal system. The trade-off for the use of the Kickstarter and Amazon systems is a user fee - Kickstarter charges 5% of the funding, and Amazon charges 3-5%.

KNOWLEDGE BOWL

Knowledge Bowl activities took place over the last three weeks. We had three teams participate in the first round, with the top-scoring team playing a second round to attempt to qualify for Regional Finals. The three teams playing first round included:

The Larks

Jacob Smith
Katie Perkins
Clarissa Short
Loyal Ulm
McKenna Raimer

The Owls

Jack Dolde
Ethan Niu
Levi Clark
Abbie Rogers
Sweet Mistry

The Bookworms

Michael Tan
Caroline Aldrich
Xiao Lu
Peter Beebe
Olivia Hrubetz

The Owls qualified for the Finals by their outstanding performance in the second round, and so participated in the buzzer rounds at Merle Hay Mall on October 28, where they tied for 3rd place overall. What a strong showing! The eventual champion, Ames High School, is a perennial favorite, so we are very pleased with the outcome of the day's work. Nice job!

ACADEMIC DECATHLON

AcDec organization is in full swing, and we are on our fourth study session as of the 31st of October. This week's focus was preparation for the Speech event, and was directed by Academic Decathlon and Speech Contest judge Neil Deutsch. Neil's son, Riley, won the Speech competition at the State Tournament last year and had the opportunity to perform for the entire Awards Banquet.

Students had the chance to see a prepared speech and its critique, following the official AcDec rubric, and then to volunteer to perform an impromptu speech for feedback. Students received exciting and valuable assistance that will lead to valuable points at the competition!

AcDec competition will be even more fun this year since we will have three teams competing from the 10-12 building and an entire team from the 9th grade as well. This is the first time we've had such a large number of freshmen participating, and establishing a tradition at JMS will strengthen the program immensely.

News from JHS

Submitted by Sue Cline, ELP Teacher



Aditi J., David L., Dennis X, Jack D. Elea K., Emily V, Daniel X, Autumn A. listening to Neil Deutsch during AcDec preparation for the speech event.



David L. giving impromptu



Elea K., Daniel X., Autumn A. listen while Peter B. practices his speech.