Welcome Back! It’s hard to believe that we’re already through the first quarter of the school year! We hope everyone had a wonderful summer.

We were fortunate to have Lisa Van Gemert, a Gifted Youth Specialist with the Mensa Foundation, present at our parent program in October. If you were unable to attend the program, a link to the presentation can be found on our website at [http://www.johnston.k12.ia.us/schools/elp/programs.html](http://www.johnston.k12.ia.us/schools/elp/programs.html).

The Friends of Johnston ELP Parent Group also used our first program as an opportunity to present our ELP teachers with a donation of $3,500. These funds are earmarked for ELP staff to use throughout the year for books, resource materials, and other expenses related to Extended Learning Programming. Many thanks to our members and supporters for making this donation possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013-2014 ELP Staff</th>
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Each fall, high school students write essays as part of the college admission process. This year’s essay response prompt is noted below:

**Everyone belongs to a community of some sort. As a member of your family, your class, your team, or your neighborhood or church, you will share some experiences with everyone, but not others. Tell us about a time in your life where your connection to your community was strengthened by its differences instead of its similarities.**

**Essay response by Riley Deutsch, JHS Senior**

A highlight of my high school career has been competing in and also coaching younger teams in Mock Trial, the simulated court room competition. I love impacting the students by improving their speaking ability and confidence in the same manner that I was affected when in middle school. The very first night of practice this year the students were asked why they wanted to participate. One girl responded, “I like the fact that we have such a reputation being a part of the Johnston program, and I didn’t even have to do anything for it.” This comment put what I was doing into perspective. I was not just spending my time telling these middle school students how to ask a leading question, or how to speak in front of an audience. Instead, I was preparing them to earn the reputation they had inherited by being a part of the Johnston mock trial community.

The more I thought about it, the more I was able to comprehend the scale of this community. When I started out in middle school, I did not know much more about mock trial than that I was excited to do it. I worked with some phenomenal high school coaches who guided me to improve my abilities. My sophomore year, I was able to coach alongside some of the people who had helped coach me. This year, I am able to mentor students who I had coached when they were younger, in order to make a new middle school team the best that it can be.

I realized the only real difference between me and the group of eighth graders was our age. Next year I will be gone. The connection I have made with the people in the mock trial community will help keep the program going strong. As I have grown up in the program I have gone from being one of the students lucky enough to inherit the reputation, to being one of the individuals who lead the effort to keep it. That young lady’s comment on the first night of her first mock trial practice opened my eyes to just how big of an impact I have had on the Johnston mock trial program, and how strong of an impact it has had on me.
Latin Stems and Words

The advanced language groups in grades 3-5 are studying Latin words and stems using Michael Clay Thompson curriculum. We do not want to appear condescending as we ostentatiously throw out some of our new vocabulary words. ☺  We are challenging the students to not only learn the words, but to also USE the words! Hopefully you will catch a glimpse of what we are learning in conversation at the dinner table, or in classroom writing activities. The students are much more aware of their new words popping up in the books they are reading too.

In other advanced language groups, students have begun thinking about how language fits together in a grammar study. We are taking some of the basic concepts of grammar taught in the classroom, and extending the content.

Math Olympiad

Fourth and fifth grade Math Olympiad groups are learning problem solving strategies that will help them be successful on their tests. Some of the early strategies include Think 1, 2-10 Method, Draw a Picture, and Venn Diagram. We are anxious to tackle the first test during the first test the week of November 11.

Some things you might see when visiting the elementary schools...

* Some kindergarten and 1st grade classes participating in whole group thinking activities led by the ELP teachers in the classroom
* Some 1st graders exploring the algebra concepts of Equivalence and Equations
* Primary Education Thinking Skills (PETS) being used in 2nd grade. Students have enjoyed “seeing” their old friends from Crystal Pond Woods who have helped them review the characteristics of convergent thinking and introduced various problem-solving strategies
* Some 3rd grade students studying place value in depth by comparing and contrasting the ancient Egyptian and Chinese number systems to our own. One group even created their own number system based on a combination of the three!
* Students creating powerpoint presentations on research they selected
* Logic puzzles and perplexors
* The use of iPads to practice new skills in language and research
* ALEKS—a web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system with some 3rd and 4th grade students
* 5th graders conducting literature studies on what a Hero is and what it is not. They will eventually focus on one particular hero and take an in-depth look at that person’s life and accomplishments
* Try-A-Tiles Area and Perimeter challenge with 3rd graders
How Can You Enrich at Home?

“I’m bored!” We have a remedy for that dreaded phrase! The ELP staff often discovers exciting challenges that we cannot fit into the school day. Here are a few that you can let your child sink his or her teeth into this fall.

**NaNoWriMo WHAT???

NaNoWriMo is a national writing contest that happens every November! It's a fun, seat-of-your-pants writing event where the challenge is to complete an entire novel in just 30 days. For one month, you get to lock away your inner editor, let your imagination take over, and just create! That means participants begin writing November 1 and must finish by midnight, November 30. The word-count goal for our adult program is 50,000 words, but the Young Writers Program (YWP) allows 17-and-under participants to set reasonable, yet challenging, individual word-count goals.

In 2012, over 300,000 adults participated through our main site, and 80,000 young writers participated through the YWP.

For more information, check out the website: http://ywp.nanowrimo.org/

**Advertising Interactive Game**

Advertising to children is nothing new. But with so many students now plugged in to some kind of media for hours a day, exposure to advertising is at record levels. In a student's life, advertising really is everywhere, creating an even greater need for kids to develop strong critical thinking skills. The Federal Trade Commission created Admongo, an online interactive game for kids ages 8-12. The fun, fast-paced world of Admongo.gov gives students an adventure in critical thinking and advertising. Kids build their avatar and enter the online world of advertising challenges. For more information visit: Admongo.gov

**Invent Iowa**

Invent Iowa, one of the premier programs through the Belin-Blank Center, serves the needs of talented young inventors. The Invent Iowa program encourages students to creatively think and solve problems through the invention process. Now in its 26th year, the program has celebrated the work of thousands of students in grades K-12. These novice inventors, whose inventions range from humane mouse traps and mitten driers to devices that make life easier for someone with a disability, continue to amaze and inspire us with their inventions. For more information, visit this site: uiowa.edu/belinblank/students/inventia/

**It's all About ME!**

A group of 5th graders is practicing their algebra skills by taking a look at the math that is all about them! They are creating equations as they learn about fingernail and toenail growth. They are looking for patterns as they consider the different lift expectancies amongst populations today. The possibilities for practicing algebra are limitless as they discover and work with amazing body facts and trivia.
News from Johnston Elementary Schools
Submitted by Mitzi Hetherton, Nancy McGill, Kristen Hartman, Kate Florer

Did you know….?

...That the chocolate bar you ate last week started from a bean growing in a pod on a tree near the equator? 2nd graders have studied the cacao tree and learned it grows only in the tropics; they’ve learned that cacao can be spelled at least two ways and pronounced at least two ways; and have learned about the color and size of the pods. They have tasted cacao beans, ribs, 86% cocoa, milk chocolate, dark chocolate, and white chocolate—which really have no chocolate in it at all!

Leah S. working on her cacao tree drawing

Tina W. and Reagan Z. working on their chocolate research

We’re on a Scavenger Hunt!

4th graders enjoyed a vocabulary scavenger hunt as part of their Caesar’s English studies.

Elise H. and Mackenzie L.

Katie S. and Anna L.

Anthony W. (green) and Ben C.(blue) adding details to their drawing of a cacao tree
Members of the five Summit Middle School / Johnson Middle School Mock Trial teams competed at the Des Moines Regional Event on October 29, 2013.

Teams Gold, Firestorm, and Dragon will move on to the State Mock Trial Competition on November 18-20 in Des Moines. GOOD LUCK!


Team Firestorm (Top right): Chris Y., Aditya S., Sloane W., Allie T., Swathi D., Julia C., Grace C., Lauren G., Will G., Kate H.


Team Purple (Bottom left): Kenzie S., Macy T., Kade J., Lydia T., Dain T., Nika S., Conor W., Angela C., Carolyne W.

Team J-Town (Bottom right): Obsee A., Sophie V., Katelyn W., AbbyKate B., Noah J., Sloan M., Lauren F., Will H., Marianne A.

Outstanding Attorney Awards
- Marianne Aldrich
- Noah Johnson
- Katelyn Winkler
- Sophie Van Zee
- Allie Tubbs
- Lauren Gabby
- Grace Campidilli
- Kate Hapgood
- Dain Tack
- Veronica Silkin
- Hailey Abbey
- Prakhyaht Bujimalla
- Jack Lucas
- Kathryn Ikeda
- Harshini Abbaraju
- Anika Schmidt
- Mark Nagel

Outstanding Witness Awards
- Lauren Gabby
- Macy Thompson
- Kenzie Stanley
- Julia Cavanah
- Swathi Damodarian
- Jack Lucas
- Hailey Abbey
- Sean Reddick
- Ally Andreasen
- Anelise Gebard

Congratulations!
Administrators Brian Town, Joy Wiebers, and Kevin Blackburn are in disguise as they assist 6th grade Law & Order students in their analysis of the field sobriety tests given to defendant Jordan Archer in the State of Iowa vs. Jordan Archer case as Summit SRO Brad Lowe looks on.

6th grade Math & Art students created transforming origami 8-pointed ninja stars to show dissections of polyhedrons similar to the models created by Greg Frederickson and the origami methods and math theorems developed by Dr. Robert J. Lang.

6th grade Math & Art students Madison D. and Amy L. hold an image of Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and multiple overlaid student geometric analyses of the painting. Each student analyzed the image for geometric shapes to determine purpose and use of color in their analysis process.

6th grade Math & Art students created origami showing manipulation of single-plane geometry and then determined the geometric angles used.

6th grade students in Law and Order pose with their Team Amethyst sign after arguing their side of the State of Iowa vs. Jordan Archer case: Jaxon K., Marshawn G., Sam D., Charlie P., Jackie L., Brooklyn D., and Makenna G.

6th grade students in Law and Order pose with their Team Topaz sign after arguing their side of the State of Iowa vs. Jordan Archer case: Aditya D., Sam S., Keyshawn G., Mary N., Anna J., Laura P., and Christopher J.

6th grade Math and Art students created kirigami showing the differences origami between origami and kirigami when you involve a second place in geometry by cutting -folded paper.
The goals of the Extended Learning Program are to meet the needs of high ability students in the areas of critical thinking, creative problem solving, research, communication, affective concerns and real life problems. Students have different levels of abilities and their needs should be met in different ways. The programming is a response to student needs. At some point, students may be involved in a level of service through ELP, which strives to make an appropriate match between the student and the services.

There are three levels of service in Johnston Community Schools:

- General Enrichment—Classroom teachers observe students for talents and meet their needs. Occasionally, these students are also involved in scheduled classes or flexible groups to provide enrichments or extensions.
- Strength Area—ELP teachers provide support for classroom teacher, often through extensions, teaching strategies, or materials. Students may also participate in a specific class or group for delivery of services.
- Extended Studies (PEP) - Some students need differentiated curriculum to progress academically. Services are documented and often include specific classes or opportunities. In 8th grade, opportunities include:
  - Algebra I and occasionally geometry
  - Advanced Science—physical science included (determined by guidance department)
  - College and HS planning information as part of the Career class
  - Language Arts Clusters, with several high ability students in a class for delivery of services
- ELP pull-out during resource time includes Mock Trial and History Day

As 9th graders begin their high school career, they are finding that the key to involvement is to take initiative. There are numerous activities and opportunities available, but students have to pay attention to announcements and information. All of the students on any level of Extended Learning recently met with Mrs. Paul, building ELP teacher. The students were provided with information about options, such as competitions or assistance with creating their high school schedule.

In the ninth grade, opportunities include:

- Pull out during study time or after school
  - Special projects
  - Academic planning
- Language Arts cluster
- Geometry or Algebra II/Trigonometry
- Biology
- Extra-curricular activities which are open to any student
  - Mock Trial
  - History Day
  - Academic Decathlon
- Other academic contests or opportunities—writing, math, etc.

Parents and students are often concerned about academic rigor at the start of high school. Placement in math or science may be an issue. Courses are sequenced because the curriculum scaffolds as students progress. If a student were to eliminate physical science, for example, they would not have the background for Chemistry or Physics that is needed. Recommendations to move to an advanced class are made after careful consideration of grades, work ethic, and academic testing. If a student is in an advanced class, placement occurs with the expectation the student will continue to advance throughout high school, and not simply “finish” a sequence and eliminate a specific discipline. By accelerating into compacted math in 7th grade for example, the progression would be to move to Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and finally Calculus or Statistics as a senior. If college is a goal, skipping an entire year without a math class would be a potentially difficult situation.

If students do not take Compacted Math (formerly Pre-Algebra) in seventh grade, and instead take it in 8th grade, this provides for math all the way through pre-Calculus as a senior. Students can also take more math classes by "doubling up" in a year, since some math courses are a semester long, during two periods. Therefore, there is more than one way to take four math courses (or more) in high school. Sometimes students are not ready for abstract concepts in math or science while in middle school, but are by high school age. What is right for your neighbor may not be appropriate for your student.
**7th and 8th Grade Mock Trial**

Students in the Extended Learning Program meet goals through a variety of programming. This fall, some 7th and 8th graders are increasing skills in communication and problem solving through the Law-Related Education Mock Trial experience. By doing extensive reading and research, along with mentoring from a lawyer and high school student coaches, students are able to develop the roles needed to present a trial in a competition. This year, the trial is a criminal case, and students have utilized the services of a School Resource Officer to understand the process police use in dealing with a crime. The school nurse is assisting with the related medical issues with the case. Some students will portray medical professionals and police officers, while some will become other characters, including an actor. By the time of the district competition on October 29, students who are portraying lawyers will also have created multiple drafts of opening statements, closing arguments, as well as direct and cross exams. Students are very busy as the program requires extensive outside of school commitment, but the end result will be growth in writing, reading, speaking, analysis, problem solving, and teamwork.

While there are 50 Middle School students participating, the “supporting cast” in addition to Mrs. Paul, includes Summit ELP teacher Mrs. Ites who teaches a Law-Related Education class, thirty high school student coaches, ten attorney coaches, and nine team parents! The support is incredible and ensures that students have an optimal experience.

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**National History Day**

Qualifiers for National History Day contest last June were honored at the State Historical Building on October 18 with a breakfast with Governor Branstad. Those attending included high school students Andrew Boge, Aditi Dinakar, Abby Dockum, and Middle Schoolers Brooke Thacker and Allie Tubbs. Unable to attend was Nicole Hobson, who is a foreign exchange student this semester. Teacher Kathy Paul accompanied the students.
High School Happenings

High School projects have been running along smoothly. In addition to project work, the class participates in a group activity once a month to work on specific ELP goals. In September, the activity was designed to allow students an opportunity to reflect upon their favorite books from their childhood. The students could choose to read their books aloud, shared why they loved the books so much, and then used the Moodle forum program to comment on each other’s choices. It was great to hear so many old favorites shared in the room! Selections ranged from *The Fire Cat* and *Yettle the Turtle* to *Eragon* and *A Bad Case of Stripes*. Lots of warm memories were relived for all of us.

Knowledge Bowl Competition

Knowledge Bowl competition took place during the month of October in the high school. We began the competition with an initial internal contest between 6 teams. The top two teams, Team Coati and Team Axtlotl, won the opportunity to play for a chance to attend the Regional finals at Merle Hay Mall on October 31. Look for results in our next newsletter!