



HOOFPRIINT



Shickley Public Schools - Preparing Students for Success

Cultivating Culture: Welcome to Shickley!

By Tyler Dahlgren - Nebraska Public School Advantage Communications Director

A Small School with a Powerful Culture

The career path that led principal Erik Sokol to the delightfully quaint town of Shickley, Nebraska was, in essence, one long case of culture shock. *Pleasant* culture shock, that is.

Eight years ago, the Sokols made the move to the Heartland. From the land of millions to North Platte (population: 25,000), where he taught at nearby Hershey. Then there was two years at Bruning-Davenport, and another at Freeman.

Living and working in Arizona, administration never appealed to Sokol. Things changed when he made the move to Nebraska, where the ability existed to influence change and develop more interpersonal relationships that would ultimately lead to a more positive experience for each and every student.

“When you talk about resources and funding and what rural schools in Nebraska do for kids, it’s phenomenal,” Sokol said.

When he came to Shickley two years ago, Sokol heard the “Welcome to Mayberry!” jokes and laughed. In a short amount of time, he started to realize those “jokes” were almost based in reality. He had landed in a special place.

“Everybody around here has so much pride in the school,” Sokol said. “They want to continue to see great things happen here, and there is such an affinity and a system of support for these kids.”

Small, but impactful. That’s exactly how 2nd-grade teacher Caroline Mosier describes the district, which is home to an innovative early-education program called “Diapers to Diplomas”, one of the only of its kind in the state. Pictured to the right are some of the daycare kids in the toddler room.



“We’re very fortunate because though we have such a small district, we’re a very powerful school district,” Mosier said. “We are proud to have our own school, a lot of towns our size no longer can, or they are combining schools. We’re still able to have our own school, and that’s very important to the community.”

The district co-ops with Bruning-Davenport in athletics, and the Eagles are usually near the top in all-sports standings at the end of the year. In other activities, the school held on to its Shickley Longhorns moniker. For the last decade, the co-op has been a blessing, though it took some getting used to at first.

“You’re taking three very, very successful schools, communities and towns, who are very prideful in the things they’ve done and accomplished,” Sokol said. “And now we get to share that.”

Shickley Public School is also supported by one of the finest school foundations in the state. It helps to keep them competitive academically. The district is 1-1, and has produced numerous impressive scholars.

“The success is really fun when you look at it because it’s not just in sports, it’s also in academics,” Sokol said. “Our kids are hitting on all cylinders, and that’s certainly what we want. I think a lot of that was in place before I arrived. People

would say 'Shickley's a great place'. And, sure, on the outside looking in it looked that way. But on the inside now, being with those that are here and make this place what it is, it really is a special place."

Math teacher Sandi Snyder is in her 28th year at Shickley, and has felt a part of the school's family culture for the better part of three decades.

"We're all there for each other," Snyder, who gets invited to three or four weddings a year by former students, said. "We all have each other's backs, and we treat our students the same way."

Part Two: A Special Type of Kid

Ask a Shickley teacher about the type of students who roam these halls and pull up a chair. They're likely to go on a while.

"We have great kids," said 5th-grade teacher Zac Schlegel, a 2007 Shickley graduate. "I think a lot of that is how they're raised. They're taught how to be hard workers from an early age."

Every single teacher we talked with during the visit used "respectful" when describing Shickley students.

"They're very welcoming to new people, too," said Snyder. "We just have awesome kids. We are in a unique place. I think as long as the teachers respect the kids, they learn that respect and give it right back."

When Sokol moved to Nebraska, he was impressed right away by how involved small-school students are in extra-curricular activities. It happens naturally in a small school. Every student is part of the district's heartbeat.

"It was like, wow, the starting quarterback is also in choir and competing in Quiz Bowl," Sokol said. "These kids are involved in everything. And the community supports everything."

Senior Regan Alfs is a standout athlete and also placed third nationally in FBLA for a business plan she formatted last year. Her involvement in FBLA has taken her across the country, from San Antonio to Baltimore to Anaheim.

"It makes you a better person," Alfs said of being heavily involved. "Between digging into the business side through FBLA and volleyball and basketball, it teaches you to work together and other life lessons, but also allows you to be with your friends."

Sitting next to Alfs is senior Alyssa Nolt, a state-qualifier in speech, who moved to the "tight-knit" community when she was in second-grade.

"I would definitely encourage younger students to take in as many activities as they can, just because it's a great opportunity to get to know your peers better and to make connections with people outside of your school," Nolt, who is also involved in music at the school, said.

Just inside Shickley's doors sits a yellow bench with the words "In a world where you can be anything, Be Kind" carved into its frame. If my morning spent at the school is any indication, the folks here take these words to heart.

"We're very kind to each other," said Alfs, who plans to study at UNL and one day become a teacher. "Being in a small school, you are friends with everybody, so you can kind of tell if something's bothering someone and you know how to comfort them. Having a positive, upbeat environment helps."

As seniors, Alfs, Nolt, and their classmates take it upon themselves to pass that friendliness along to younger Shickley Longhorns.

"As upperclassmen, we try to help out the younger kids who may be confused and we try to just reach out and get to know them," Nolt, who wants to study at Hesston College to become a music therapist, said. "I've really appreciated all the encouragement and support that Shickley has provided."



And if the community ever wonders if they're unwavering support is appreciated, Alfs is here to testify that it is. Every single day.

"We are very blessed because we grew up in a community that always wants us to be successful and they'll support us no matter what, whether we're fundraising to go on a trip for FFA or playing a volleyball game or competing in a speech meet," she said. "Our community wants us to be our best and watches out for us."

It's the positive experiences had by students that draw many back to Shickley down the road, when they have families of their own.

"You form relationships and bonds here that make students want to actually come back," Mosier said. "A lot of students are coming back and making careers here."

And if their roads lead elsewhere, they've got an entire school cheering them on.

"Most importantly, if we've done things right, these kids will shine and succeed after graduation," said Sokol.

Welcome to Shickley.

"This has been such a great place to work, I can't come up with a reason I'd ever leave," Snyder said. "There's just not another place I'd rather be."

They said it!

"We're all very competitive and like to be successful in everything that we do. So, if it's a practice, we're willing to come in early. Everybody is on the same side, not against each other." –Regan Alfs

"It's definitely important, knowing that your administration backs you up with everything you're doing. I've always felt that here."-Zac Schlegel

"I think I really started figuring out I wanted to be an educator when I was like a junior or senior in high school. I really started picking up on what my teachers were doing and how their love and their drive to make us better kind of transferred to me."-Schlegel

"Schools like ours want to make sure that we do what we can to remain vibrant and to remain innovative, so that we can keep our doors open for years to come."-Erik Sokol

"I think the fun thing is, it's just genuine. We have genuinely great kids, and we have teachers and a staff that care about those kids."-Sokol

"I have different students who graduate and come back and say 'Hi Mrs. Mosier! I remember when we did this or we did that in your class!' or 'Second-grade was so much fun!' And we'll talk about how they're doing in college and how they're lives are going."-Caroline Mosier

"I feel our teachers are very supportive and always willing to go the extra mile to help us, even if it means they have to come in early or stay late. They just want us to be successful."-Regan Alfs

"We really are blessed to have such a great community supporting us in whatever we're doing."-Alyssa Nolt

Pictured to the right are seniors Regan Alfs and Alyssa Nolt being interviewed by Tyler Dahlgren of Nebraska Public School Advantage.



Healthy Hooves Report, by Mrs. Zajic

For the month of October, the staff health and wellness challenge is Master Gardener. During this challenge participants are asked to add and care for plants in their home or office space. They are encouraged to grow a fresh herb and try it in a salad or sandwich as well as nourish any wellness behavior within them.

Houseplants provide visual beauty as well as health benefits such as adding oxygen to the air and absorbing carbon dioxide. Extensive research by NASA has revealed that houseplants can remove up to 87 percent of air toxins in 24 hours. Studies also show that indoor plants improve concentration and productivity, reduce stress, and boost mood.

Upcoming events: October 2, 2019 -- National Walk or Bike to School Day.

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Summer Reading Challenge Winners, by Miss Hansel

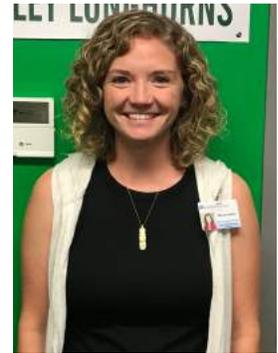
The Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge came to an end on September 6th. This year's top readers representing Shickley Public Schools are pictured to the right: Raleigh Carlson, Jaylyn Zajic, and Emmett Mussman!



Language Resource News, by Mrs. Zajic

Meet Mrs. Brendell Martin! Mrs. Martin joins the Shickley team, one day a week as our speech-language pathologist. Mrs. Martin received her bachelor's degree at South Carolina State University and her master's degree in speech-language pathology at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. After graduation, she worked at Children's Rehabilitation Center in Hastings for one year and then transferred into school pediatrics.

Mrs. Martin is originally from the Clay Center, NE area and moved back after graduation with her husband, James Martin, and two children. She reports that she loves small-town communities and looks forward to working in the Shickley School District.



English News, by Mrs. Hinrichs

This year English 9-12 is going very quickly! At the beginning of the year, the students wrote and they are still writing. Discussing the elements of writing as they proceed with their creative writing stories. Soon they will peer edit and finish their stories. Vocabulary has also been a focus in the classroom. Slowly building a word wall for each class, improving their knowledge of academic words. Speech studied what it takes to be a good speaker and are now watching, listening and studying charismatic speakers who changed the world.

This year I have had my first true-ever "the dog ate my homework!" Therefore, teachers, it does happen!



Senior Spotlight - Brock Swartzendruber

Brock Swartzendruber has always enjoyed farming, hunting, showing livestock, and being at the lake. At school Brock appreciates the advice Mr. Elwonger has given him to help him succeed. Mr. Elwonger has convinced Brock to challenge himself. Even if a class is difficult, you should push through if you are passionate about what it is presenting you. Brock is grateful that Shickley Public Schools has offered college classes that allow dual credit. The school has provided many opportunities that he has been involved in. Brock's favorite organization through the school is FFA. FFA has taught him valuable leadership skills. Brock is an FFA officer and also likes to compete in the AG Sales contest. This is one way he is able to connect with his classmates and friends. Brock is thankful that he is apart of a supportive class and hopes they will make a few more memories together before the end of high school. Shickley has taught Brock many lessons, but he has also learned that he will always be welcomed back home.

By Hannah Miller, English 9

FFA Officers and Fourth Grade Students Attend Ag Venture Day, by Miss Witte

On September 16th, 2019, members of the Shickley FFA officer team helped with Ag Venture Day which is put on by South Central Cattlewomen. Thayer, Fillmore, and Clay County 4th graders were invited to the day. They learn about different areas of agriculture. Serving as group leaders for the day and pictured to the right are: Reid Richards, Austin Plock, Justin Stengel, Brock Swartzendruber, and Sam Margheim. "This event is neat to see what kids know about agriculture and what they don't," said Justin Stengel.



Third Grade In Full Swing

It is so hard to believe that the end of the first quarter will be in a few short weeks! The students in Miss Johnson's third grade class have been busy creating new learning experiences and memories. In math, they have been learning about place value, expanded and standard form. They then had the chance to play place value dominos to test their skills. Next, moving onto subtracting using borrowing and regrouping into the ten thousands place. Multiplication and division are just around the corner! In reading, third graders have been busy learning about complete sentences, fragments, subjects and predicates. They love independent AR reading time and reading chapter books! Third grade students also have been building relationships and reading skills with kindergarten students. Reading buddies is an opportunity for both kindergarten and third grade students to read to one another. They look forward to this every other Friday! Shickley Public Schools got a new science curriculum. Miss Johnson's focus has been hands on learning and drawing conclusions based on "out of the box thinking."

Third grade students will be participating in their annual Trick or Treat for the food pantry. They need YOUR HELP! On Wednesday, October 30th, they will come around to community houses to collect goods to donate. If you will not be home, feel free to drop them off at school, outside of Miss Johnson's classroom. Happy Fall Ya'!!!

Pictured to the right is kindergartener Lila Eitzmann reading with third grader Aubrey Domeier.



From the Kitchen, by Darlene Mick

This year started off with some new things for the children in the kitchen. We are joining the state with "Nebraska Thursdays". This program is a way to get local Nebraska grown items on the menu. So far we have had Nebraska grown beef, pork, cucumbers, watermelons, squash, tomatoes, peppers, corn on the cob, pears, apples, and onions. It is a way to show the children what we can grow here in Nebraska. Thank you to everyone who has generously shared their produce with the lunchroom.

We are also trying out "Taste Test Thursdays". We make something different that we do not normally serve and give all the children a "taste". The reactions have been mixed, but it exposes the children to something they may not have ever had. We will try to continue this each month, so ask your children what they have "tasted" at school.

Our school is what the state considers an "Offer vs. Serve" school. I would like to try and explain what this means. This program allows students to decline some of the food offered in the school lunch line. The goal of "Offer vs. Serve" is to reduce food waste in the school meal program while permitting students to decline food they do not intend to eat. Each day there are 5 different food groups that are offered to the students, meat, fluid milk, grains, fruits and vegetables. They may choose all 5 items or at least 3 different food items with one being a fruit or vegetable to make a complete meal according to the state regulations. They can also get a second entrée for 50 cents, a second bread if offered that day for 25 cents, a second milk for 35 cents or they can get seconds from the fruit and vegetable bar for free. Breakfast is done a little bit different. For breakfast 3 items must be taken and one of them must be a fruit or juice. I always offer cereal, as well as, the hot food item, fruit, juice and milk. I haven't found a good vegetable to serve with breakfast yet, but I am still looking.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Husker Harvest Days, by Miss Witte

Juniors and Seniors enrolled in the SENCAP (Southeast Nebraska Career Academy Portfolio) or dual credit agriculture classes attended Husker Harvest Days on September 11th. While attending the largest irrigated farm show students were able to learn about the different career pathways within agriculture through a career scavenger hunt. They were also able to see new technology that was being showcased at Husker Harvest Days.

Those attending are pictured to the right.



FFA Edge Conference, by Miss Witte

The FFA area EDGE Conference was held in Grand Island at Central Community College on September 25. The conference workshops were facilitated by the Nebraska state FFA offices. Members who attended learned about the importance of communication from non-verbals to listening versus hearing. They also looked at how to take intentional steps to be a leader and what opportunities await them in FFA. Freshmen and 8th-grade members who attended are pictured to the right: Hannah Miller, Seth Stengel, Ashley Schlegel, Coy Margheim, Lauren Richards, Logan Johnson, and Jay Kempf.



Miss Shickley Crowned Milo Queen, by Mrs. Noel

Kaylee Noel, daughter of Monica and Reg Noel, was crowned the 2019 Milo Queen on September 14. Contestants represented the towns of Belvidere, Carleton, Deshler, Hebron, Hubbell, Ruskin and Shickley. Throughout the day, the contestants participated in an interview and formal gown competition, yoga, and learning about healthy relationships from the HOPE Crisis Center. Shortly before the parade, the queen contestants spent time with the princesses making sashes and crowns. Kaylee received scholarship money which was donated by the Carleton Community Club and will represent the town of Carleton and the Milo Day celebration at other parades and gatherings throughout the upcoming year.



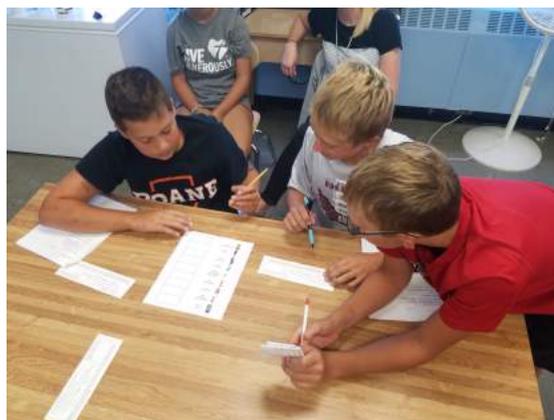
Education Quest Financial Aid Presentation, by Mrs. Noel

All junior and senior students and their parents are invited to attend the Education Quest's FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) presentation being held in Mrs. Noel's room on Thursday, October 10, beginning at 10:00 a.m. The informational meeting is a great time to learn more about the required forms needed to complete the application process and to get your individual questions answered. If you are unable to attend our FAFSA meeting, there are many happening in neighboring towns and schools. If you need more information, please get in touch with Mrs. Noel or look online at Educationquest.org. The date to begin submitting FAFSA applications is October 1st.

Middle School Health Fair, by Mrs. Noel

The junior high students attended a health fair, sponsored by Thayer County Hospital, at Davenport on September 25th. The students began the fair by watching a presentation about social media and how to keep themselves safe. They then broke into smaller sections dealing with safe social media, vaping, high-intensity interval training, hand hygiene, addiction, distracted driving, concussions, bullying, eating right and rethinking their drink choices.

In the picture on the left students are participating in the high-intensity interval training session. In the picture on the right students are determining which drinks had the most sugar in the Rethink Your Drink session.



Great Things Happening at Shickley Public Schools

Fall is in the air....or at least a few days have seemed that way! We are in full swing here at Shickley Public Schools. Students are becoming familiar with new teachers, classes, and activities. We recently celebrated homecoming week with great participation and fun for all. It seems to be the beginning of another great year for our school and students.

I hope everyone read the article about Shickley Public School through the Nebraska Public School Advantage at the beginning of this *Hoofprint*. In this article students, teachers, and administration have been interviewed. These interviews highlight the culture of our school, among other positive characteristics that we celebrate here. I first saw the article on social media. I thought it was neat how many alumni, patrons, teachers, school board members, etc. shared the article. It shows the great pride that we have for our school, no matter what the connection. Whether it be as a school board member, substitute teacher, or parent, I am proud of the positive culture that I have experienced here at Shickley Public Schools.

Please take the time to read this article. We have great things happening here at school. Our administration, staff, and students work hard to make Shickley Public Schools a special place. Only the best to our students, coaches and sponsors as they compete this year in the many activities and sports. I believe it's the beginning of another great year. And as always, it's great to be a Longhorn!!

Tiya Johnson
Shickley Board of Education



