



"We Teach Students; not classes"

# VOYAGEURS NEWS

Hex 2 Newsletter

November 2014

November is here and with it brings preparations for winter and the holidays. We are now 3 weeks into our 2nd grading period and finally are able to move into our new addition for the middle school. We are excited to be able to spread out and get all of our classrooms set up and functioning as we envisioned when we started the process of planning to add on to the building over 15 months ago. Please feel free to stop by and do a quick tour of the new space when you are in town. Access to the new space will be through the main office. The doors on the addition will be exit only doors to continue with our security plan of only allowing access to the building via the main office.

We have two expeditionary Friday's between now and the holiday break on December 20. On November 7th, we have many service and team building opportunities available for students and on December 19th we will have a holiday celebration for the students which will include staff making breakfast for the students and going to a movie in the afternoon. Remember that your child receives a grade and credit for high school students for their participation in these fun Friday experiences.

## *Spring Expeditions*

*Voyageurs has set aside the week of May 25th for our big expedition week for all students. Students in grades 9-12 can sign up for an out of state expedition.*

*Registration continues through November 21. If you intend to have your student participate in one of the out of state expeditions, please make sure to have the \$80.00 deposit in to Jean by November 21.*

*If not enough students sign up for a planned expedition by Nov. 21 it may be cancelled. If this is the case, your deposit will be refunded and alternative in-state expeditions will be planned.*

*Planned out of state expeditions are:*

*Texas—Becky*

*New York City—Julie*

*Winnipeg—Cindy*

*Seattle—Troy*



**MAAP STARS Fall Leadership Conference**

**VES Students D'Andre Gordon; Mandy Bushong; Garrett Baumann and Taylor Kummert-Hiltz joined over 150 other students from schools throughout Minnesota at the Annual MAAP STARS Fall Leadership conference in Little Falls, November 5 & 6**

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## COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE MONTH A HUGE SUCCESS

The month of October was very much focused on exposing students to Post-Secondary information. We had many activities planned for the month of October and November.

October 1st—BSU College Fair

October 8th—Jeremy Chase—  
Leech Lake College Rep. Visit

October 15th—Kari Kantuck,  
Northwest Technical College Rep.  
Visit

October 15th—Senior class completed a thorough tour of the BSU campus.

October 23rd—Manufacturing  
Tour of local businesses

October 29th—College Application  
Day—90% of seniors completed at  
least one college application

November 7th—tours of Itasca  
Community College and Leech Lake  
Tribal College.

We certainly believe that the more exposure students have to information about post-secondary opportunities, the better prepared they will be when it comes time to make some decisions about what's next after high school. We continue to encourage all of our students and families to have those conversations at home.

## ACT Explore; ACT Plan; ACT Compass & ACT

Last May, the MN Legislature passed a new law requiring all students in Minnesota in grades 8; 10 and 11 take an ACT developed assessment. Students in grade Grade 8 will take the ACT Explore; Grade 10, the ACT Plan & ACT Compass; Grade 11, the ACT w/Writing and the ACT Compass.

The Explore and Plan are being administered in November; The online ACT Compass in January and the ACT w/ Writing in April.

The state is paying for all students in these grades to take these assessments as part of the World's Best Workforce legislation.

These assessments are also included as part of our Ramp Up to Readiness Program, so we will be spending time before administration reviewing the assessments and assisting students with test taking strategies. As a parent if you want more information about these assessments, please go to [ACT.ORG](http://ACT.ORG) and you will find information for parents about them.

## It's Official.....

On November 7th, the VES Middle School addition was officially opened for business. Pictured below are: Kari Nelson, Katie Boell and Adam McCullough (Middle School Teachers) cutting the ribbon to mark this milestone. Many thanks to our landlord, Jeff Cwikla; general contractor Dave Cuperus of Cuperus Construction and all of the sub-contractors for all of their work making our new space become a reality.





**Leaf Raking for Seniors in the Bemidji Community**



**Bemidji Area Food Shelf—Taking care of Banana's**

## **Service Learning—A Way of Life at Voyageurs**

*“The mission of Voyageurs is to provide students with the necessary tools to lead productive lives through hands-on learning, service to others and environmental stewardship.”* Each year, students are required to participate in and document 20 hours of service learning. Over the course of the year, students have many opportunities to provide service, not only to the school but also to the community, the state and individuals living in other countries. On Friday, November 7th, 2/3's of our high school students participated in a community service project: Students helped move the middle school into their new space; others did highway clean-up and a major recycling project; while another group of HS students mentored the middle school students through the Character and Challenge course in Park Rapids, the final group spent the morning at the Food Shelf and the afternoon raking senior citizen's yards in the community.

Students also help out around the building with weekly cleaning of advisories and assisting with lunch (serving and cleaning-up). We appreciate all that students do to help our community.

## **COUNSELING SUPPORT AT VOYAGEURS**

Voyageurs has established partnerships with North Homes, Inc. and Evergreen Services to provide counseling support to our student body. Susan Kramer from North Homes is at Voyageurs on Tuesday's & Thursdays and Megan Bushian from Evergreen will be on campus on Tuesday's. Megan will provide basic social work/counseling support while Susan provides more in-depth therapeutic, treatment. If you would like to have your son or daughter access support, please contact your child's advisor and it will be arranged.

## **TEXT4LIFE and SUICIDE PREVENTION/GATEKEEPER TRAINING**

In December we will be working with Stephanie Downey (Evergreen Suicide Prevention Specialist) and Ayla Koob (Text4Life), to provide training and support for our students who may have been touched in one way or another by the recent suicides among young people in our communities. Text4Life is a service that students and families can access if they are struggling with thoughts of self-harm and need someone to visit with. Gatekeeper Training is a program that helps youth understand what they can do when someone they know are talking about harming themselves.

We will continue to offer assistance to students who may be thinking of harming themselves and will contact parents to inform them of what we are being told by the student. Our counseling goal is to make sure that every student is getting the support they need to be emotionally healthy people with the skills necessary to make good decisions about their life.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS: CREDIT RECOVERY & ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

Voyageurs is offering two after school program for students needing either credit recovery (gr 10-12) or students needing extra assistance in their academics (gr 6-10). Advisors will visit with the HS students who should do credit recovery and MS students were identified after the completion of NWEA MAP Assessments and first hex grade reports. Limited transportation home will be available. If you would like to have your child access one of these programs, please contact Becky Reinartz—HS Credit Recovery; ([Becky@VoyageursSchool.org](mailto:Becky@VoyageursSchool.org)) or Emma Schaper—grade 6-10 Academic Support After school program; ([Emma@VoyageursSchool.org](mailto:Emma@VoyageursSchool.org))

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Research has proven over and over again the connection between school attendance and school success. Showing up for school each and every day is very important in order to make adequate progress in your child's education. While we attempt to contact parents every day their child is not in school, parents have a responsibility and obligation to report their child's non-attendance no later than 10 a.m. of the day after their child is gone. A written note or a phone call would be very much appreciated.

Valid reasons (excused absences) for missing school include illness (verified by Dr's note after more than 3 days); family emergency; planned family trip; verified appointments, family death, etc.. Illness, if your child is ill (running a fever, throwing up, coughing excessively, etc.) please keep them home for the day so they can rest and get better and hopefully not spread their illness to other community members.

If students are not feeling well at school, they are to check in with Jean in the office. We have a place for students to lie down for a while. We also have Tylenol and Ibuprofen, which we can administer to help them feel better and hopefully be able to stay in school for the day.

Per state law, **Voyageurs must comply with attendance reporting and truancy filing for students who have more than 7 unexcused absences. An unexcused absence is an absence where we are not able to confirm a valid reason why a child is missing school.** All students under the age of 17 are required to be enrolled and attending school daily. Students under the age of 17 with excessive unexcused absences will have truancy filed on them.

### Grades and Non-Attendance:

You should have received your child's grade report for the first six week grading period. If you did not make it in for conferences, please contact your child's advisor to discuss their progress in school. A lot of students who did not have a successful grading period, also had many absences from school. While we as a rule do not assign homework to students, our expectation is that if they are absent, they must ask their teachers for their missing assignments and complete them in a timely manner.

### JMC Parent Access

All parents have the ability to access their students progress reports online through our JMC Parental Access Portal.

If you have questions about accessing your child's grades,, contact Jean Fjelsta in the office.

Her e-mail is:

[jean@voyageursschool.org](mailto:jean@voyageursschool.org)

Phone: 218-444-3130

### Calendar—November/December

Monday, November 10th—Board Meeting—5:15 p.m.

Wednesday, November 12th—Early Release; No After School Programming

Wednesday, November 26th—End of 2nd grading period

Thursday, November 27 & 28—No School—Thanksgiving

Monday, December 1st—Start of 3rd Grading period

Monday, December 8th—Board meeting—5:15 p.m.

Saturday, December 20—January 4th—Winter Break

Monday, January 5th—School Resumes