

October, 2009

KNOW YOUR SCHOOLS

From the Office of the Superintendent - Ron L. Alburtus
Jasper County Community Unit School District #1

It's hard to believe, but our first quarter of the 2009-10 school year will soon come to an end. Parent and Teacher conferences are coming up during the first full week of October. More information will be coming out from each school. Our students and staff have been very busy both in the classroom and out. I want to thank all of our fall season coaches and band directors in the District as well as all of those who assist them. Seasons are well under way. The coaches and staff members invest countless hours and energy in providing solid programs for our youth. Be sure to let them know how much you appreciate what they do for kids. Also, to all of those parent support groups and volunteers who have also worked diligently this fall, thank you!

On November 3, 4, and 5, children in grades K-3 in Jasper County Schools and St. Thomas will receive books from the Reading Is Fundamental program. That program is funded in part through the RIF grant and generous donations from the Newton Rotary, and the Knights of Columbus/Holy Name, and the PTOs of Grove Elementary, Newton Elementary/Jasper Co. Junior High, and Ste. Marie Elementary. Their generous donations to the RIF program have allowed us to place a new book in the hands of children three times during the school year. On Columbus Day, October 12, school will not be in session. Veteran's Day is Wednesday, November 11, and there will be no school that day. The Jasper County Junior High band will be performing on the square for the Veteran's Day ceremony, honoring the veterans of our County. We hope you come out to honor those fine men and women that day. First quarter grade cards will be coming home on October 26.

I am sure you are now aware that seasonal flu and H1N1 influenza viruses may arrive earlier this school year. Flu can be easily spread from person to person; therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the spread of flu in Jasper County Schools. We want to keep our schools open to students and functioning in a normal manner during this flu season. We are working closely with the Jasper County Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning schools should the flu become a concern. We will keep parents updated with new information as it becomes available through notices sent home and/or the Alert Now Rapid Communication Service. Here are a few things everyone can do to help.

- Parents should be sure that contact information is current by letting the school know of any changes or additions to those contacts.
- Remember the three **Cs**” **Clean** - wash hands frequently to prevent the spread of germs; **Cover** – your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve, not your hand; and **Contain** your germs - stay home if you are sick.

- Remind your children not to share personal items like drinks, food or unwashed utensils.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea.
- Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- Do not send children to school if they are sick. Any children who are determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Parents should have alternate plans ready should their children need to be picked up at school.

For more information on the flu and H1N1, visit the Jasper County Health Department web site at www.jasperhealth.org.

A new law becomes effective January 1, 2010, regarding cell phone use while driving. Public Act 096-0131 states that those under 19 years of age holding an instruction permit or a graduated license may not drive a vehicle on a roadway while using a wireless phone, unless used for emergency purposes. Newly added is the following: "A person, regardless of age, may not use a wireless telephone at any time while operating a motor vehicle on a roadway in a school speed zone or on a highway construction or maintenance speed zone," unless in an emergency. You can read the law in its entirety at: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0131&GA=096>.

Last year, The Illinois Association of School Boards set a day in November as School Board Members Day. This year that day is November 15, 2009. Send a card or give one of the Jasper County Schools board members a call to let them know that you appreciate what they do for schools and for our children. Our board members are: Fred Huddlestun (President), Gordon Millsap (Vice President), Melinda Barthelme (Secretary), and members Gregg Weber, Anthony Richards, Holly Farley, and Mike Knepper.

Please visit the School District web site for more information, news, and events at www.jaspercountyschools.net.