

August 2009

PONCA PUBLIC SCHOOL



505 3rd Street, P O Box 568
Ponca, NE 68770

www.poncaschool.org

223 North John Street, P O Box 67
Jackson, NE 68743

Notes from our Superintendent

Welcome to the start of the 2009-10 school year! Anytime the calendar page flips over to August, we know that the beginning of a new school year cannot be far off. If most students were truthful on this matter, my guess is that they look forward to the start of school. They get to be back with their friends, get involved in school activities, and move on to that next class level which provides challenges and excitement for them. For parents, school always means life returning to normalcy. Structure and routine return to set a different pace in the home than existed during the hectic summer months.

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On Tuesday, September 15th, registered voters in the Ponca Public School District will have the opportunity to vote on a bond issue for the construction of new, and renovation of existing, facilities for the school district. Funds from a successful vote will be used for the purpose of constructing a new junior-senior high school, demolition of the existing junior-senior high school building, and some renovation to parts of the 1974 edition. To meet the goals established by the Board of Education for this project, it will be necessary to issue bonds in the total principal amount of, and not to exceed, \$9,520,000.00.

Bond issue votes for the purpose of constructing school facilities are certainly not new to the Ponca School District. Votes in September, 2004; June, 2005; and February, 2006, all failed to reach the mark of 50%+1 majority for passage. All of these votes were about construction at an off-site location; involved larger buildings with much more square footage; involved a higher initial cost for construction; and, which resulted in a higher tax rate to repay the bonds.

The September 15, 2009 vote offers District constituents a different approach to meeting the critical need of aging school facilities in our District. Foremost, the new junior-senior high school building will be built on land to the west of the present facilities. The District has purchased most of the land on the block immediately to the west. The District architect has assured the Board that there is sufficient space to accomplish the goal of constructing the new junior-senior high school on this site. Portions of the 1974 edition will be remodeled to blend into the new construction. Demolition of the existing junior-senior high school building will create space for locker rooms that will adjoin a new gymnasium. The District's auditorium will receive some renovation for instrumental music instruction and fine arts performances. Two existing classrooms will be remodeled for vocal music classes. To connect present facilities on the "east block" with those on the "west block," a hallway will be constructed crossing Washington Street, which will be permanently closed to street traffic.

Article continued on next page...

One of the major changes to this bond vote, will be the casting of “mail-in ballots.” Registered voters will be receiving ballots in the mail during the last week in August. Instead of going to a polling site to cast votes, all that is necessary is to mark your ballot and return it in the mail by 5:00 p.m. on September 15th.

Your members of the Ponca Board of Education have worked long and hard on this issue of meeting facility needs for the school district. It has been an issue in front of this community, and the Board, for many years. The proposition put out to vote on September 15th, is the Board of Education’s answer to meeting that need.

Community meetings will be held in mid-August to give constituents an opportunity to view building plans and to ask questions about this important vote in our community. Dates and sites for these public forums will be publicized at a later date.

A very special welcome to those of you who are new to our communities and/or school district. I am confident that you will find your choice to be part of our school district to be a good one. I encourage you to get involved in our communities and school and help us make them even better! As always, stop by anytime you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

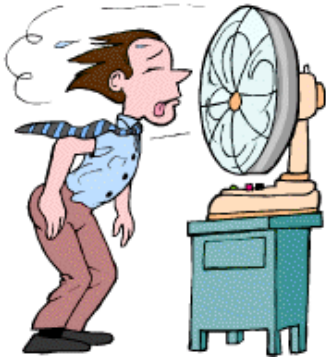
Have a great year!

William F. Thompson, Superintendent

Elementary Parent Night – Parent Night for elementary students at Jackson Elementary and Ponca Elementary will be on **Tuesday, August 18th**. The schedule for **Jackson Elementary is from 6:00 to 7:30**, **Ponca Elementary is 7:00 to 8:30**. This evening will give parents and children the opportunity to meet and greet classroom teachers prior to the start of the school year. Teachers will have the chance to get to know parents informally with less concern about academic concerns. Students will be able to find their rooms, desks, and lockers. Students are greatly encouraged to bring their school supplies with them on this night to be placed in their desk and locker. This will eliminate a lot of confusion on the first day of school and greatly reduce the chance of losing any supplies while on the bus, or before school. -- Pre-school and kindergarten parents will receive a letter from your child’s teacher notifying you of a scheduled time for your visit. Teachers want to take 10-15 minutes to specifically meet you and your child to explain some of the procedures and expectations for your child’s first year in school. Letters will be arriving shortly. Hope to see all of you at Parents Night.

Hot Lunch Prices/Free & Reduced Priced Lunch Applications - Ponca Schools participate in the federally subsidized National School Meals Program that allows children from families meeting certain income guidelines to receive free or reduced price meals. Application materials for the District’s Free & Reduced Priced Lunch program are provided with this newsletter. The process involving application, approval notice, and the student going through the lunch line is strictly confidential. Reimbursement rates provided to the District from the state and federal government are higher than the price currently charged for a regular priced meal. These reimbursement dollars are important to the school’s hot lunch account. They benefit the entire District by helping to keep prices charged for regular-priced meals low. The District encourages families to complete this application, even if the chances to qualify may seem remote. Hot lunch prices for Pre-K- 6 and 7-12 students are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

HEAT SCHEDULE - August 19th to September 4th



The 2009-10 school year will be the 7th year for the heat schedule to begin the school year for the Ponca Public School District. To create a consistent schedule for school attendance, regardless of the daily weather, students will be dismissed on a special schedule for the first two (2) weeks of the school year.

From Wednesday, August 19th, through Friday, September 4th, school will begin at 8:00 a.m., and will be dismissed at 2:00pm. During this special “heat” schedule, school buses will run their routes thirty (30) minutes **earlier** than last year. For example, if a bus picked up your child at 7:30 a.m. last year, that student would be picked up at 7:00 a.m. for the first two weeks. Dismissal time from classes will be at 2:00 p.m. each day with buses departing shortly afterwards.

Beginning Tuesday, September 8th, the school day will return to its regular schedule for the year. School will begin at **8:15 a.m.**, and will dismiss at **3:30 p.m.**, barring unforeseen circumstances due to weather, breakdowns, or other emergencies. As in previous years, your cooperation is greatly appreciated calling the school to report whether your child will ride the bus or **NOT**. Please call the District office at **755-5700** to report. Messages will be relayed by radio to your child’s bus.

ELEMENTARY PARENT NIGHT

Elementary Students and Parents of Jackson and Ponca will have an opportunity to meet and greet their teachers on....



Tuesday, August 18th
6:30 – 7:30 in Jackson
7:00 – 8:30 in Ponca

(Students are encouraged to bring all their school supplies with them on this night to be placed in their desk or locker.)

Kindergarten Parents

The Kindergarten teachers would like to meet with your child and get a chance to visit with him or her for a few minutes during the Elementary Open House on Tuesday, August 18th. Students and Parents will be assigned a time slot when they will have an opportunity to see the room, find their locker and put supplies away. Kindergarten parents will receive a letter from the teachers notifying them of the assigned time to visit your child’s teacher and classroom.

Hot Lunch Accounts

Lunch accounts will be set up as individual accounts, just like last year. If a family owes a total of \$100, we will not serve a hot lunch to the students. Students will receive a peanut butter and jelly sandwich until the account is paid.

Families are encouraged to review the free and reduced application that is enclosed in this newsletter.

Just a reminder: You are able to log on PowerSchool and check your child's lunch account balance at any time. If you have lost your parent ID and password, please call the school, and we can easily give it to you again.

**New
Lunch
Prices!!**



Ponca School Lunch Prices 2009-2010

Students Full Lunch

K-6.....	\$2.25
7-12.....	\$2.50
Milk (K-12).....	\$.30

Students Seconds

Main dish.....	\$ 1.00
Fries, etc	\$.50
Cookies, cake.....	\$.50
Ice Cream.....	\$ 1.00

Adults

Singles Meal/Salad.....	\$3.50
Single Serving.....	\$ 1.25
Single Milk	\$.30

Legal School Age

Every child who, on or before the 15th day of October in any year, shall have attained the age of five years and who has not attained the age of 21 years shall be deemed to be of legal school age.



Enrollment in kindergarten is available to children who live within the Ponca Public School district boundaries and who are five (5) years of age or will be five (5) years of age by October 15th of the year of their enrollment. The only exception to this rule is in the case of an incoming transfer student who has been enrolled in a kindergarten program in another school district during the present school year and has not reached five (5) years of age by October 15.

DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION

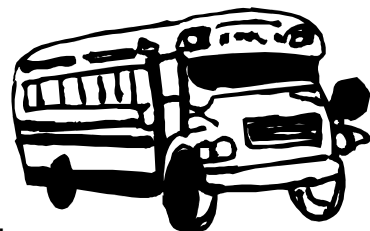
Shuttle Bus to Jackson Elementary - The District will again operate a special shuttle bus route to Jackson Elementary for students from the town of Ponca, and for rural students who are transported to Ponca by means of a regular bus route. This shuttle bus will leave from Ponca Elementary, for Jackson Elementary, after the rural route buses have completed their morning route. During the “heat schedule” portion of our schedule, August 19 to September 4, the shuttle bus will leave for Jackson at approximately **7:45a.m.** Starting September 8th when the District returns to its regular schedule, the shuttle bus is scheduled to leave Ponca for Jackson at **8:00a.m.**

Bus #00 will serve as the shuttle bus and will be located on the west side of Ponca Elementary. Pre-School, kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade students who will be attending Jackson Elementary will need to be on the bus by the **7:45 and 8:00** departure times.

At approximately **3:15pm**, the shuttle bus will leave Jackson Elementary and return students to Ponca for dismissal, and in time for their rural route bus departure. The District will have additional personnel available to help facilitate a smooth transition for students.

A District associate will be on the bus to Jackson to supervise students, on both the morning and afternoon shuttle routes.

Jackson Students - Students within the Village of Jackson should meet their bus at Jackson Elementary. Jackson Elementary will be the only pick-up and drop-off point in Jackson.



Rural Bus Routes - Rural students are transported to their attendance center through the District’s normal regular route system. The District has seen an increase in the number of students who need bus service. In order to comply with bus capacity and riding time constraints, the District is still working to develop these routes and pick-up times for the coming year. During the week of August 3-7, bus drivers will be contacting families along their routes to notify of pickup times. Some routes for this coming year will change from last year. It is no guarantee that students will be riding the same bus as last year, or that pick up times will be the same. We ask for your patience as these routes are developed and times become consistent during the start of the year.

With the earlier start time for school this year, families will need to make an adjustment to bus arrival in the morning. During the heat schedule, starting August 19th, buses will arrive about 30 minutes **earlier** than their normal time from last year. This will end on Friday, September 4th.

Starting Tuesday, September 8th, school will start at 8:15am for the remainder of the school year. Bus pick-up times will be approximately 15 minutes **later** than during the heat schedule the previous week. Bus drivers will communicate the change in pick times as appropriate.

Families new to the District, kindergarten parents needing regular route transportation, and families who may have moved to different addresses are encouraged to call the Superintendent’s office, 755-5700, for bus route information, approximate morning pick-up and afternoon delivery times.



PONCA SCHOOL BUS RIDER RULES

Any activity, which worries or distracts the driver is objectionable and may endanger the lives of the students. Besides the safety factor, transportation equipment is expensive. Students are expected to cooperate in the maintenance and preservation of district owned transportation vehicles. In order to operate a safe, efficient and economical transportation system, it is absolutely necessary that all passengers observe the following rules:

General Conduct Rules:

1. Students are under the authority and charge of the bus driver at all times. Students must obey the driver promptly and courteously.
2. Students shall be courteous to the driver, to fellow students, and to passers-by.
3. Students must be on time for the bus both morning and afternoon. The bus cannot wait beyond its regular schedule for those who are tardy.
4. Students should never play or loiter on the roadway when waiting for the bus.
5. Students shall cross the road in accordance with instructions from the driver.
6. Students should enter and leave the bus at school loading sites and at highway bus stops in an orderly fashion and in accordance with instructions.
7. Each student should go directly to his or her seat upon entering the bus.
8. Books and other property should be properly stored out of the way and the aisle should be clear at all times.
9. Students should refrain from crowding or pushing other students while on the bus.
10. Students shall not extend their hands, arms, or head through the bus windows.
11. Students shall remain seated while the bus is in motion.
12. No horseplay, roughhousing, and throwing of objects in the bus or out through the windows is permitted.
13. Students should keep their feet off the seats and sharp objects off the upholstery. Any student responsible for damage to a bus will pay for the damage.
14. Students should keep the bus clean. Trash buckets are placed on each bus for refuse and other throw away articles.
15. In order for the bus driver to allow a student(s) off the bus at places other than the regular bus stop at/near home, proper communication or authorization from parents is required.

Riding Privileges Revoked Immediately:

1. No smoking, tobacco, or alcohol use on the bus at any time.
2. Profanity will not be tolerated. Any profanity or obscene gestures used on the bus, or directed towards the driver, will result in immediate suspension of bus riding privileges. This will be strictly enforced.
3. Physical attacks, threats, intimidation or bullying of other students on the bus will result in suspended privileges.
4. Other misconduct, as deemed inappropriate by school administration, will be reviewed as necessary.

In the past parent cooperation has been exemplary and we trust it will continue. Students who cannot behave while riding the bus and whose actions distract the driver from his/her job of safely transporting students, will have riding privileges suspended or revoked. We sincerely hope you will help us make our school buses safer for both students and drivers. We would appreciate all parents taking a few minutes to review these few rules, and to go over them with your child.

Thank You.



Notes from Ms. Rinas....



In no time at all, our summer activities will be exchanged for the activities of the 2009-2010 school year. On Wednesday, August 19, our school staff will be welcoming students back to school. The student day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. Elementary students are to report to their classrooms and secondary students to the west gymnasium for a general assembly. Expectations for student conduct will be reviewed and changes for the 2009-10 school year will be presented. Class meetings and shortened class periods will follow the assembly.

Students will be updated on the changes in policy 6.51 Graduation Requirement Time Line. The newly adopted policy states that to be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony, a student must have met the district requirements for graduation by the end of the school day (4:00 p.m.) prior to practice for the scheduled event. A student who has not met the requirements for a Ponca High School diploma may be granted the current year high school diploma upon meeting the credit requirements prior to the first day of the next school year. This policy was changed based on what the graduation ceremony represents at Ponca Public School and that participation in the commencement exercises is a privilege. The Ponca School commencement exercise is a special ceremony which serves as a public recognition of a student's personal achievement in meeting the district requirements for graduation. The requirements include academic credit, attendance, and student conduct. Only those students who have met the requirements prior to the graduation ceremony have earned the privilege to participate in the ceremony. The students who have not met the requirements by the scheduled event have not earned the privilege to participate in the ceremony. Those students however may earn a current year high school diploma by completing necessary requirements prior to the first day of the start of the subsequent school year.

The school dress code will also be reviewed on the first day of school. The following guidelines will be used to determine if student dress is considered modest and appropriate for school: the hemline of shorts, dresses, and skirts should fall no higher than four inches above the knee, tops are to have a moderate neckline and completely cover the torso at all times, sleeveless tops should completely cover the back and have two straps two inches or wider, and under garments may not be worn as outer garments. (The complete Student Dress Code may be found in the brochure, "Expectations for Student Conduct and Attendance" each student will receive in class meetings on August 19, 2009.) Students found not complying with the dress code may choose to leave school to change clothes or be restricted to the office.

Secondary students receive several forms the first days of school that require a parent signature. Please review the information on the forms with your child, sign where indicated and have your child return the signed forms to the Principal's Office. All students must have on file by Wednesday, August 26, 2009, the signed signature pages indicating they received copies of the brochures, "Expectations for Student Conduct and Attendance", "A Student's Rights to Due Process" and the "Guidelines for Extra-Curricular Activities". The brochure, "Guidelines for Extra-Curricular Activities" requires a separate signature page to be completed and returned to the Principal's Office. A student who does not have the signature pages on file by August 26, will not be eligible to participate in or attend school activities until such time the signed signature page is received in the Principal's Office.

"Parent's Back to School Night" is scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2009. This is a great opportunity to meet your child's teachers. The teachers will present a brief summary of classes, grading procedures, and expectations as well as answer questions you may have. Parents of 7-12 students please report to the west gymnasium at 7:00 P.M., pick-up a copy of your child's schedule and be ready to pass to the first period class at 7:10 P.M. Parents will be finished at 8:11 P.M. We look forward to visiting with you on August 27!



Go Big Blue!!

To all Parents of students enrolled at Ponca Public School... As a parent of a student at Ponca School, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if you ask for it. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

1. Whether the Nebraska Dept. of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subject he or she teaches.
2. Whether the Nebraska Dept. of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
3. The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
4. Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of the information, please contact the Superintendent's office.

The Ponca Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints, grievance procedures, or the application of these policies of nondiscrimination:

Ponca Public Schools
Superintendent of Schools
505 3rd Street
Ponca, NE 68770
(402) 755-2241

Appeal procedures beyond the local level need to be addressed to the following office:

Office for Civil Rights
8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037
Kansas City, MO 64114
(816) 268-0550

FAX (816) 823-1404; TDD (800) 437-0833

The Ponca Public School requests your help in locating handicapped children. The school implements the Federal Handicapped Children's Act (PL 94-142) and Nebraska statute, which guarantees a free appropriate educational program for all children between birth and 21 years of age. If you have students or know of any young person who meets these criteria, please contact Superintendent's office.

Ponca High School Schedules Final Class Registration For the 2009 - 2010 School Year

Final fall registration has been scheduled for students in grades 9-12 the week of August 3-5. Every 10-12 grader will need to stop by the elementary library between 8:00 A.M. and 12:00 (Noon) or 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. on the day which has been set aside for his/her class to check final schedules. If there are conflicts or questions concerning a student's schedule, changes will be made at that time. Registration dates are as follows:

Seniors: Monday, August 3
Juniors: Tuesday, August 4
Sophomores: Wednesday, August 5

Freshmen students and their parents are urged to attend an informational meeting on Monday, August 3, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. in the Ponca School Elementary Library. Ms. Rinas and Mrs. Hassler will host this meeting designed to orient 9th graders and their parents on high school requirements and class scheduling.

Special Note To Juniors and Seniors:

Those 11th and 12th grade students who plan to register for college credit courses through Northeast Community College (N.E.C.C.), Norfolk, NE, must meet N.E.C.C. program requirements before registering for those classes. Program requirements include:

- 1. Student must be a junior or senior in high school.**
- 2. Rank in the upper half of his/her class academically, and have a cumulative grade point average of "B" or its equivalent, or have a composite and/or sub-score (depending on the course) of a 20 or higher on the ACT, or equivalent scores on other standardized test such as the PLAN, ASSET, PSAT or SAT.**
- 3. Be chosen carefully and recommended by the high school academic staff.**
- 4. Meet the prerequisites of the course.**

Cost for the college credit classes is \$81.00 per credit hour and most classes are three credits.

If students plan to register for N.E.C.C. college credit courses they need to pay class fees the day of final registration as books need to be ordered for the start of classes. **Checks or money orders should be paid to the order of Northeast Community College. No cash will be accepted for class payment.**

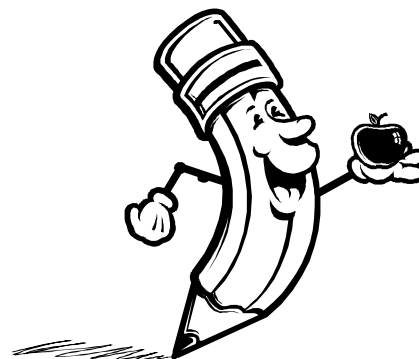
11th and 12th Graders in School-To-Work Class...You are reminded that in order to participate in this class you must turn in your SIGNED training agreement contract the day of final registration. Your employer must sign this sheet.

Junior High School Supplies!!

To help with organization skills, we are asking that each 7th grade student have the following items ready for the first day of classes. For the **prong folders**, we ask that students have the **stronger plastic material**, as these folders are used quite often throughout the year. **Notebooks** should be **college-ruled**.

7th graders will need:

- English
 - Green prong folder
 - Green 2 pocket folder
 - 1 Green notebooks (1 subject only)
- Science
 - Red prong folder
 - Red 2 pocket folder
 - Red notebook
- Math
 - Blue prong folder
 - Blue 2 pocket folder
 - Blue notebook
- Social Studies
 - Black 2 pocket folder
 - Black notebook
- Study Skills
 - Large binder (trapper keeper/it is helpful, if it zips) In Study Skills, students will focus on organizational skills immediately. This is a great tool to be a successful student.
- Red pen
- Blue/Black pen
- Pencil
- Highlighter
- Calculator – scientific optional



8th graders will need:

- English
 - Yellow prong folder (same plastic material as needed for 7th graders)
 - Yellow 2 pocket folder
 - Yellow notebook (1 subject only)

SCIENTIFIC CALCULATORS NEEDED FOR 7-12 GRADERS

Math Students in grades 7-12 need to bring a scientific calculator to class. At times, students will not be allowed to use them such as when learning how to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Calculators that have two lines of display are recommended. This allows students to see what they entered and to edit their work, if necessary, without reentering duplicate information. A scientific calculator of this type will be used in all junior and senior high math classes except Pre-Calculus. Scientific calculators can be purchased for about \$15.00. In Pre-Calculus, students will be allowed to check out and be responsible for a graphing calculator.

PHONE CARDS FOR 7-12 STUDENTS

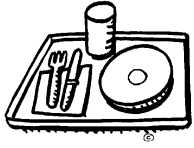
There may be times when a student needs to make a long distance phone call during the school day. Students are encouraged to carry a phone card. If parents prefer, the card can be kept in the high school office. (Please place your name on the card).

Help your School as a Volunteer

Becoming a school volunteer can be one of the most rewarding experiences in life. Sharing a special talent, reading a book to a kindergartner, helping an elementary student with reading, assisting the school librarian, helping to put up an interesting bulletin board for the classroom teacher, acting as a crossing guard to help children across a busy street, and helping chaperone on a field trip are all ways that one can serve as a school volunteer. School volunteers enhance the effective use of teachers in the classroom, broaden the educational experience of our students and, generate greater community involvement and good will in our schools.

Volunteers are made up of parents, business people, retirees, high school students, and community organization members. People may volunteer regularly, on special occasions, or serve as special resource speakers.

If you would like to volunteer your time, abilities, or talents, simply call your principal's office at 755-5700.



Ponca 3rd – 12th grade Lunch Menu



August 2009

Milk Served Every Day		19 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potato/Gravy Corn Peaches Roll & Butter	20 Mini Corn Dogs Nacho cheese/Chips Green Beans Pineapple	21 Deli Turkey Sandwich Baked Beans Chips Rasp. Applesauce
24 Burrito Lettuce Salad Fruit Cocktail Krispy Bar	25 Scalloped Potato/Ham Green Beans Pears Roll & Butter	26 Goulash Lettuce Salad Banana Garlic Sticks	27 Chicken and Noodles Pears Fruit Cocktail Roll & Butter	28 Hamburger/Bun Fries Cole Slaw Peaches
31 Shredded Pork Scalloped Potato Corn Apple				