

March 2018

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



Hard to believe it's already March! Hopefully the weather starts turning warm and the massive amounts of snow begin to melt. It has certainly been a winter to remember (a blizzard resulting in 3 snow days in a row, temperatures below -25°, and snow that feels like it never stopped). That said, I would like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding with the decisions made regarding to cancel school, or not, and whether to start late, or not. I know it is an inconvenience at times, but please know the decisions are made in the best interest of safety.

In response to the February 14 school shooting that took place in Parkland, Florida, a letter was sent to the parents/guardians of students in the Ponca Public Schools. The letter is on the back side of this page for you to read. Our thoughts are with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school community as they move forward after such a tragic event. The Ponca Public Schools takes student, staff, and school safety very seriously. We routinely visit/revisit our safety procedures and practice safety drills to be sure students know how to respond to crisis situations. The staff and students of the Ponca Public Schools thank you for your willingness to help keep our buildings safe and adhering to the procedures we have in place.

With spring, comes the testing season. I would like to request your assistance in helping your student(s) prepare for the days of testing. It is important that the children eat a nutritious breakfast the day of testing, and a good night's sleep the night before. Also, be willing to have conversations with your child(ren) regarding the importance of the tests and see how they feel about the tests. A simple conversation can help calm their nerves. We are excited to have our students show how much they've learned and can't wait to see their results!

***Announcement** – The Ponca Public Schools will be listing the old art building for sale/bid in the near future. The building is certainly part of our district's history, however it has not been used in several years and we feel the space could be better used. Details regarding the listing will be communicated at a later date. If you, or someone you know, are interested in purchasing/bidding on the building, please contact me at school (402-755-5700) to schedule a showing. The winning bidder will be responsible for moving (and the cost) of the building off school property, as the district will maintain the rights to the lot.

At the March 19 school board meeting, I will update the board of education with the number of snow days we have used to date, and the anticipated last day of school for the 2017-18 school year. Hopefully the snow stays away and we don't lose any more days of school. Also on the March 19 agenda will be the 2018-19 academic calendar. Next year's calendar will be distributed shortly after the March 19 board meeting.

Reminder Dates:

Thursday, March 8th: End of 3rd Quarter

***Thursday, March 8th:** EARLY DISMISSAL – Boys State Basketball (1:10 at Jackson / 1:30 at Ponca)

Thursday, March 8th – Saturday, March 10th: Boys State Basketball (Lincoln, NE)

Friday, March 9th: NO SCHOOL – Winter Break

Thursday, March 29th: EARLY DISMISSAL

Friday, March 30th: NO SCHOOL – Easter Break

Monday, April 2nd: NO SCHOOL – Easter Break

Friday, May 11th: EARLY DISMISSAL – GRADUATION

Wednesday, May 23rd: Last day of school (tentative)

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Ponca Public Schools

*Ponca Public School / 3rd Grade – 12th Grade
505 3rd Street, Box 568
Ponca, NE 68770
(402)755-5700 (402)755-5773 (Fax)
Derek Lahm, High School Principal*

*www.poncaschool.org
Jody L. Phillips, Superintendent*

*Jackson Elementary / Preschool – 2nd Grade
223 North John Street, Box 67
Jackson, NE 68743
(402)632-4276 (402)632-5014 (Fax)
Robert Hayes, Elementary Principal*

February 20, 2018

Dear Ponca Public Schools Community;

Last Wednesday, tragedy struck Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida when a gunman entered the school, opened fire, and killed 17 staff and students.

While it is impossible to imagine the fear, pain, and grief the Parkland community is feeling, it makes us more aware that this unthinkable act could happen anywhere. A senseless act like this reminds us of how precious life is. I always wanted to believe that these horrible acts of violence just couldn't happen where "I live" or to "our school", but unfortunately, this is not a realistic way to think anymore. As a parent, this breaks my heart, but it also makes me want to do whatever I possibly can to make certain our children never experience what the people of Parkland, Florida are experiencing today. I do not know the answers to 100% prevent this from happening, but I do know that the Ponca school community has already made great strides through teaching and showing kindness and making certain every child feels loved, appreciated, wanted, and worthy of our attention. I encourage all of us to continue this work. The Ponca Public School community truly is a great community!

As a school leader, it makes me reflect on the safety and security of our students, staff, and school facilities. Whenever a school tragedy like this happens in our country, it forces us to revisit all safety procedures and protocols in place. The Ponca Public Schools' staff continue to meet as needed to refine the safety procedures and protocols at both our Jackson and Ponca campuses. The district's crisis committee meets on a regular basis to discuss and address safety concerns, plan drills, and facilitate conversations with our students.

The district's safety procedures are created to protect our students and maintain a safe learning environment. We practice these procedures with safety drills regularly. While we know these procedures and drills are sometimes seen as a nuisance, they help decrease the chance of safety being compromised at our schools. We also realize these practice drills can cause additional stress to students, but understand they are a necessary component to successful implementation. We appreciate our parents and community members who support the district's safety procedures. Ultimately, it's a team effort to build and maintain a safe school environment where students' fears are at ease.

In the wake of last week's tragedy, we know students are aware of, and are processing their thoughts and feelings differently. Please know we have staff available to speak, comfort, console, and assure our students. Tough conversations will continue and we are thankful for our religious community and other community agencies who have spent time with students and families to teach, reflect, talk, and listen. In a situation like this, everyone is affected and it will take time for each of us to reflect and process this sad tragedy. In the meantime, continue to love, respect, and take care of each other.

Jody L. Phillips
Superintendent of Schools

From Mr. Lahm's "Pen"

What a cold and snowy and icy and yucky winter. There just is not much positive to share in regards to this weather. Then, we have a tragic school shooting in Florida in which so many innocent student lives are taken.

Honestly, it is easy to get caught in the negativity of this world. There might be some of you who just wonder if this world is even worth it any more. Others may be angry and taking it out on social media. Still others may be treating the ones they love the most with shortness and impatience. (Fingers should be pointing at me on this one.) This world can be hard a lot of times, and we are constantly bombarded with these negative stories.

We know this world has its hardships. We live and work with people we may or may not get along or agree. We have calendars and schedules and deadlines, and time does not slow down when we need more hours in the day.

However, we also know that each of us can change the world with such simple deeds. **YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD** by being a positive voice when all else seems negative. A simple kind deed or note can change the life of someone in that moment or for a lifetime. You either make a positive impact or a negative impact on this world in even the smallest things you do.

This brings me back to cold and snowy and icy and yucky winter. I am so thankful to our road crews and our custodians for all the work they have done to help clear the roads. They are making a positive impact on the world. I am so thankful to our superintendent who exhibits servant-leadership in everything he does especially shoveling snow. He is changing the world for the better through his example. I am so thankful to our administrative assistants who make phone call after phone call to parents making sure that we have all students accounted for and safe. They are showing care and concern to all of our people. This list could go on-and-on.

Be the positive and be the kind word or deed. Show love and concern for each other regardless of differences. One thing I do know, those who are positive are changing the world for the better! **CHOOSE POSITIVITY AND CHANGE THE WORLD FOR SOMEONE TODAY!**

SPELLING BEE 2018...M-E-T-H-U-S-E-L-A-H was the winning word spelled by Bailey Paden at the Ponca Schools 2018 Spelling Bee. Twenty spellers started our oral Spelling Bee and the top five spellers moved onto the Dixon County Spelling Bee. Joining Bailey at the Dixon County Spelling Bee were Lucas Hoelsing, Tucker McGill, Brailyn Yellowbank, Lexi Swick, and Treston Pulley (alternate). Lucas Hoelsing earned 3rd place and Bailey Paden earned 5th place at the Dixon County Spelling Bee. Congratulations to all our participants!

SUMMATIVE AND ACT TESTING...The NSCAS Summative test is replacing the NeSA test as the official assessment instrument for the Nebraska Department of Education. NSCAS stands for Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System, and it is a brand new test being administered to all of our 3rd-8th grade students from April 17-19. Our 1:1 computer initiative allow us to test all of our students during this time allowing us to do some simple and fun incentives for all the students in these grades.

On Wednesday, April 4, all junior students at Ponca will be taking the state-mandated ACT test. This is a free test that is paid by the state of Nebraska for all juniors throughout the entire state. Juniors are currently preparing for this test through OnToCollege with John Baylor training over the next six weeks. We will administer this test using student Chromebooks thanks to our 1:1 computer initiative.

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.

National Honor Society

On Friday, April 13, 2018, at 7:00 PM, new nominees will be recognized and inducted into the Ponca Chapter of National Honor Society. The ceremony will take place in the Ponca School Fine Arts Facility.

Ponca Public School's National Honor Society is a local chapter which is established according to the nationwide National Honor Society organization which was founded in 1921 to recognize and encourage academic and citizenship qualities in students. National Honor Society continues its traditions in the 21st century.

Membership in National Honor Society is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have a cumulative scholastic average of 85% or above and who demonstrate the qualities of service, character, and leadership. Students carrying a scholastic average of 85% or above are invited to an informational meeting to learn more about National Honor Society. Only those students who complete and return a signed information sheet by the deadline will be considered for nomination in the National Honor Society. A faculty council comprised of five teachers reviews and discusses each student's information sheet, attendance, and discipline records, and teacher questionnaires. Private ballots are cast by the faculty council, and those students receiving three of five "yes" votes are then received as members into National Honor Society.

Every year during third quarter, students have the opportunity to be nominated for induction into Ponca High School's local National Honor Society chapter. Selection guidelines and expectations will be presented to those eligible 10th, 11th and 12th grade students in an informational meeting on Monday, March 5th during both lunch times. Students will eat in the library during this informational session. In order to be considered for nomination, students must return their completed and signed information sheet to Mrs. Irwin by **4:00 PM on March 5, 2018**. Selection guidelines and information sheets are available online at www.poncaschool.org under the activities tab.



The Ponca's Elementary Student Council and Thrivent Financial will host a

Bunny Hop

Daddy/Daughter, Mother/Son Dance

for students up to 6th grade.

Friday, March 23, 2018

Ponca School West Gym

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Admission to the dance will be a freewill offering.

A photo booth will be available and several raffle items along with the dance.

Raffle tickets will be sold; one for a dollar or six for five dollars.

Snacks will be provided.

Hip Hop Bunny, will be playing the music and says, "Hippity Hoppity" he wants everyone to Hop on down the bunny trail and do the Bunny Hop.

The proceeds will be donated to the school towards updating the school's fire alarm system communication box to the 911 dispatch system.



ELEMENTARY NEWS

Mr. Bob Hayes

March has finally arrived and hopefully old man winter is behind us. The 3rd quarter will end on March 8th and it seems like the 3rd quarter flew by. I hope we can say the same about the 4th quarter in May.

Although the weather is changing and warmer weather is more prevalent please dress your child in appropriate clothing for school. The students will be going outside for recess and the weather man is not always 100% accurate!

NSCAS testing and spring MAP testing are just around the corner and teachers are working hard to prepare our students for these very important tests. These are very important tests to help us measure growth and compare how we are doing academically. Parents can do their part by making sure your children get plenty of rest and eat a good breakfast before coming to school.

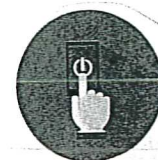
The dead line for open enrollment forms is March 15th. The forms must be in the superintendent's office by March 15th if you wish to option enroll your child into the Ponca School District. Option enrollment is determined on an individual basis and not according to families.

Class field trips are not far off and we have expectations for field trips. Classroom teachers will send home expectations before students attend these field trips. Please review these expectations with your child. Students must be in good standing to attend the field trips. Good standing means homework assignments are complete, classroom assignments are up to date, and there are no behavioral concerns.

Kindergarten roundup will be Thursday, April 5th. There will be no school for the kindergarten on Thursday, April 5th. Please check the list in the newsletter, if your potential Kindergarten child is not listed please contact the Jackson Elementary (402-632-4276) so they can be added to the list. There is more information about Kindergarten round-up in the newsletter.

It's time to start thinking about Pre-school. **The Pre-School open house will be Tuesday, March 27th at 6:00pm.** Pre-school students must be 4 years old by July 31st and cannot be kindergarten eligible.

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for March 19th at 7:00pm in the Ponca Fine Arts Center.



Keep meals fun and focused

Keep the family table a media- and stress-free zone. Use your valuable family time to "unplug," interact, and focus on each other.



Plan your meals

Avoid stress at mealtime by planning a weekly menu and posting it in a location for everyone to see, like a chalkboard in the kitchen.



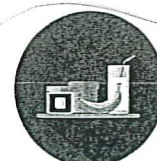
Make mealtime a priority

Make time for family meals when planning your household's schedule each week. Try to cook, eat up, and clean up together!



Prep ahead

Have ingredients for the week ready. After you shop, cut vegetables and measure ingredients in advance for easier meals.



Think beyond dinner

If evenings are too hectic at your house, consider other meals for family time such as a weekend brunch or even afternoon snack time.

Preschool Open House

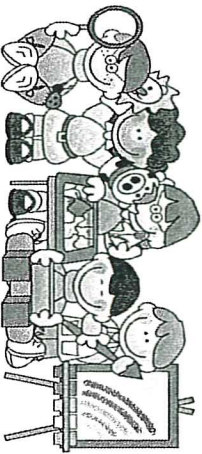


Bring your treasured preschooler to our Open House to register for next year and visit their new classroom! They will go on a treasure hunt discovering their new school and the things they will be doing each day.

**Tuesday, March 27th
6:00 pm at
Jackson Elementary**

Students enjoy a unique curriculum with many exciting events throughout the year. *Preschool is a 4-year-old program that is a full-day, every other day program that includes shuttle bus transportation from the Ponca School for your convenience.* (Student must be four on or before July 31, 2018)

I can't wait to share all the details with you!
Mrs. Mennenga, teacher



If you are unable to attend but would like to request a registration packet, please call Jackson Elementary at 632-4276.

It is necessary to complete all of the enrollment forms and submit the registration fee in order to be on the official roster.

Kindergarten ROUNDUP

Parents who have children five years of age on or before July 31, 2018, may wish to send their son/daughter to kindergarten during the 2018/2019 school year.

Kindergarten Roundup for these students is scheduled for April 5th at Jackson Elementary. Parents may register their child for roundup by returning the form below or calling the Jackson Elementary School office at 632-4276. More information concerning Kindergarten Roundup will be provided as we get closer to that date.

Please return this form to:
Jackson Elementary P.O. Box 67 Jackson, NE 68743

Child will attend _____ Child will NOT attend _____ Kindergarten in 2018/2019

Student Name: _____ Boy _____ Girl _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone Number: _____

Parents or Guardian: _____

Address: _____

The following children are eligible to attend Kindergarten at Jackson Elementary during the 2018/2019 school year. This list is according to the current census and current preschool students. If your child is not listed and is eligible to attend, please contact the office at 632-4276 or return this form to the school address listed above.

Audrey Burrell	Brielle Hogan *	Treyton Sprenger	
Presley Chase	Nora Krusemark *	Halle Stark	* Enrollment Option application necessary to attend Jackson Elementary.
Zoan Conrad-Palmer	Dax Mackling	Natalie Taylor	
Cooper Curry	Evy McAfee	Jace Uthoff	
Arianna Daley	Kenzie Nelson	Sawyer Viengutz	
Addilynn Dutcher-Bessmer	Amy Persinger	Beau Thomas Walsh	
Blue Dutton	Maggie Poulosky	Emmett Wortmann	
Emmett Effert	Tynille Schram *		
Rhett Fleury	Rylin Scollard		
Brinklee Heineman	Madison Sprakel		

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR SCHEDULED

March 16-26, 2018

Ponca School Library

Visit the fair with your children. Find their scheduled time below.

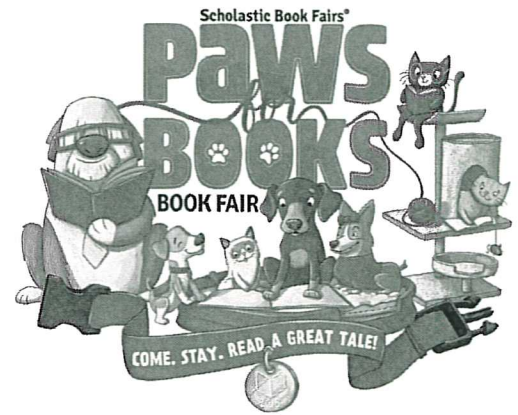
JACKSON SCHOOL

March 20	PK	9:30-9:50
	KDG-Curry	9:50-10:10
	1-Hill	10:10-10:30
	2-Sprakel	10:30-10:50

March 21	PK	9:30-9:50
	KDG-Todd	9:50-10:10
	1-Hoffman	10:10-10:30
	2-Keifer	10:30-10:50

PONCA SCHOOL

March 19	6th Grade-Webb/Pfister	2:00-2:45
March 22	3rd Grade-Simington/Templeman	1:00-1:50
	5th Grade-Carnell/Stewart	2:00-2:45
March 23	4th Grade-Stroud	1:50-2:15
	4th Grade-Fields	2:20-2:45



You are all welcome to come visit anytime during the day on the 16th and 26th.
Thank you for supporting the Book Fair where all proceeds benefit the library.
Reading is a great way to ensure your child's success.

The Ponca Community Educational Foundation (PCEF) announces it's 2018 Funding Opportunities for Ponca Graduates, School District Employees, and Patrons of the District.

One of the purposes of the PCEF is to promote and support educational opportunities for the students of the Ponca Public School District. The main avenue of support has always been funding scholarships to Ponca High School graduating seniors.

Because of recent growth from the generous support of its members, the PCEF is excited to sponsor additional funding opportunities. Listed below is a brief description of those opportunities. After reading these descriptions, be sure to encourage a P.H.S. connected student, parent, employee, or community member to apply for these resources.

Guideline information, cover sheets, and applications for each program may be found on the following website: www.pcef.net (For graduating seniors and PHS alumni, click on icon with the same name. For district employees, click on Staff Awards.) Additionally, the information and forms may be obtained by contacting the high school guidance office at Ponca Public School (402-755-5702).

Completed applications and supporting documentation must be returned to Fran Hassler, PCEF Scholarship Selection Committee Chairperson by Wednesday, March 7, 2018, 4:00 P.M., in person or via email at: franhassler@poncaschool.org (Please note: Due date deadlines will not be adjusted in the event of technology difficulties.)

Funding categories presently include:

1. Awards for P.H.S. Graduating Seniors
2. Awards for P.H.S. Alumni
3. Awards for Certified Staff Members at Ponca Public School
4. Awards for Non-Certified Staff at Ponca Public School

Should an individual, family or business wish to contribute to the PCEF, please contact:
Foundation President Richard Dohma, (402) 755-2224. Thank you.

Funding Opportunities Article (updated: 1-9-2018)

UPCOMING MUSIC EVENTS:

March 6th – Middle School Festival @ WSC time TBA
March 13th – USD Jazz Festival
March 16th & 17th - Back to the 80s the Musical
March 24th – Class C All-State @ Kearney
March 26th – Northeast Jazz Festival
April 9th - High School Concert & Awards Night
April 20th - District Music Contest



Congratulations to the following students For being selected to participate in the Class C All-State Honor Band!!

Wind Ensemble: Carin Mellick, Sarah Beach, Morgan Janssen and Sam Brickett

Symphonic Band: Meg Keller, Jacob Statema, Claire Hoelsing, Katie Meister, Olivia Hrouda,
Ben McDuffee, Tommy Chase and Colson Watchorn

Junior High: Abbie Hrouda, Grace Rooney, Lucas Hoelsing, Matthew Hayes,
Matthew Lentz, Austen Janssen and Chase Kastning

The honor band will be held on March 24th in Kearney, NE at the Kearney Public High School.

The concert will start at 5:00 p.m.

Attention Pep Band!!!!

Our boys' basketball team has been having a great season!!! The pep band will be traveling with them down to Lincoln! Once we know more details, they will be announced.

Boy's State Basketball is March 8-10

Ponca Public Schools Presents:



“From the era that brought the world The Rubik's Cube, Atari, and The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles comes this "totally awesome" musical in the style of movies such as Back To The Future, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, The Karate Kid and The Wedding Singer.

Join the graduating class of William Ocean High School as they live through their final senior year - as they experience the fun, the heartbreak, the loves and the loneliness of growing up....
all set to the biggest hits of the 80's!!”

2 Shows Only!

Friday, March 16, 2018 at 7:00

Tickets available in the Elementary Office
Adults: \$8 | 19 and under: \$5

Saturday, March 17, 2018 at 7:00

Ponca High School Fine Arts Auditorium

Ponca School Newsletter
Ponca Public School
P O Box 568
Ponca, Nebraska 68770

Non-Profit Organization
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Ponca, NE 68770

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PONCA PUBLIC SCHOOL

MARCH 2018



**NOTICE TO PARENTS OF PONCA SCHOOL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENTS
WHO MAY BE CONSIDERING ENROLLMENT OPTION FOR THE 2018 – 2019 SCHOOL
YEAR**

Parents or guardians considering the use of the enrollment options program to enroll their child/ren in another public school district in the state of Nebraska should be aware of the following date:

March 15, 2018 – The Nebraska Department of Education deadline for filing enrollment option application for the 2018-2019 school year unless a waiver of dates is granted. (If the enrollment option application is filed before March 15th, 2018, the application does not need to be taken to the school the student is leaving.

Limitation - The enrollment option shall be available only once to each student prior to graduation unless:

- (a) the student relocates in a different resident school district,
- (b) the option school district merges with another district.

Eligibility – Eligibility will be considered for transfer students who have transferred from one school to another when there is not a change of domicile by the parents. Those students who have their transfer papers signed and filed on or before March 15 shall be eligible immediately in the fall. According to Nebraska School Activities Association, those students who do not have their transfer applications signed and filed on or before May 1 shall be ineligible for 90 school days.

Transportation – The parents of the optioned student shall be responsible for required transportation to the option district.

If you have questions regarding the enrollment option program,
please contact the Ponca Superintendent's Office at (402) 755-5700.