

# The S-DCS Column

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS OF SUNMAN-DEARBORN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Is it ever too late to learn something new? No it is not too late! As an educator with 29 years of experience that includes 11 years as a superintendent, I am not immune to the learning bug. Recently, I attended a conference for superintendents and school board members in Indianapolis that provided many learning opportunities. The topics covered by this conference included: 1:1 Digital Learning, Common Core Standards Integration, Model Schools, Affordable Health Care, Strategic Planning, Problem-Based Learning, and Personalized Learning to name just a few. In many of these clinic sessions, I learned new information from practitioners in the field who are Indiana educators, building administrators and school board members. They have sought out new ways to improve student learning in their schools that I found to be very compelling and useful to our school district.

Does professional development have to take place outside of our schools? The answer is no. Each year our teachers and administrators review student data, analyze curriculum, instruction and assessment. They meet in school and district committees in the areas of curriculum, assessment, technology and safety to think, discuss, share ideas and develop strategies that will impact student learning, improve the culture in our schools, and make our schools safer. There are times when consultants and guest speakers who are experts in their fields are brought into the schools to work with groups of teachers and administrators on curriculum, instruction, assessment, state standards and school safety.

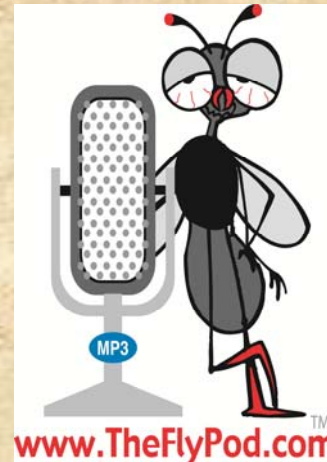
Does professional development really impact student learning? Yes. Over the last four years, our students' test scores have improved. Our students perform at much higher levels than the state averages. Our teachers work many hours to establish relationships with students, and they develop strong lessons that improve student learning. Teachers are continually looking at ways to improve their practices using tools such as technology and data that is accessed through a data warehouse. Our teachers could not be effective if they had not continued to learn new and better ways to teach students.

As a school corporation, we have found that it is not only the students who must be continuously learning, but our teachers, our administrators and even the superintendent must continue to learn as well. If our school corporation continues to find ways to move from being a good district to a great one, then we all must be responsible in learning all we can to make good, educated changes necessary that will take our school district, our administrators, our teachers, and our students to the next level.

*Dr. Jeff Hendrix*  
Superintendent

## DON'T MISS THE BUZZ

Each month Sunman-Dearborn Schools is featured on The FlyPod, a local entertaining yet informative media source. Superintendent Dr. Hendrix joins host Gary Puckett monthly for his "SuperChat" podcast. Enter <http://tinyurl.com/SuperChat-SDSC-3> in your address line on a new web page to hear the latest SuperChat. This month's chat will be recorded on Thursday, October 3rd and will feature Tom Harris, Director of Support Services, discussing transportation for the Sunman-Dearborn Community Schools. Joining Mr. Harris will be two current bus drivers for our district, Cheryl Lieland and Dale Bergman.



## THE SKINNY ON "FUN SIZE" CANDY

Halloween is rapidly approaching, which means that candy is everywhere! It can be very tempting to grab a piece of candy, or 5, and think nothing of it. Be careful with those "fun size" candy bars as they still pack a caloric punch! Here are a few tips to get you through the Halloween season without busting out of your costumes.

- Keep candy out of plain sight the more you see it, the more tempted you will be.
- Only buy enough candy to hand out to trick-or-treaters so that there is not any left over to tempt you.
- Buy your trick-or-treating candy as close to Halloween as you can. The longer you have it sitting around before you give out, the more likely you will be to break into it.
- Limit the amount of pieces you eat during the day. Decide a reasonable amount to eat for a day and stick to that number. This will allow you satisfy your candy cravings, while giving you the satisfaction of sticking to your goal.
- Do not think of abstaining from candy as neglecting yourself, rather think of eating the candy as a special and seldom treat. Hence,

trick or TREAT .

Start your holiday season off right! If you feel that you have accomplished abstaining from over eating now, then you will be more likely to stick with it for the upcoming holidays!

*Ms. Olivia Scardina*  
*Director of Food and Nutrition Services*





## EAST CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

It has been a solid start to the school year and East Central has had some great things happening. I wanted to take a moment and focus this news note on school safety and the measures we are taking to address that. In addressing the new bullying law, we started by holding two homeroom times this month to introduce the elements of the law to the students as well as conduct a personality inventory. Through this inventory, we were able to help the students better understand themselves and each other. We then held discussions on topics of a bullying nature to seek how each group would respond to different scenarios. We will continue the lessons for bullying prevention and awareness as the year progresses.

Along these same lines, our school has adopted a new protocol to respond to any dangerous intruder in the building. The new response is referred to as A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate). This new response augments the existing 62-page safety plan that East Central High School has had in place for several years but provides sensible responses to react to an unfolding crisis. More will be shared and taught to students and parents alike as the year unfolds.

Trying to prepare for every possible crisis is very difficult, but we want to try and anticipate possible situations, we actively conduct drills for various situations. One such country-wide drill is called the Great American Shakeout. This drill is an earthquake response drill to prepare for that event (the New Madrid fault possess some concern). We have participated in the past and plan to do so in the future from time to time. Along with monthly fire drills, tornado drills, and other disaster drills we hope to be prepared for anything that might

happen and be ready to respond safely. Please note that "Safe Schools Week" is October 21 – 25.

Another safety topic is distantly related; drugs. To help battle the war on drugs, our school continues to conduct random drug tests for all athletes and drivers. Along with this, our entire teaching staff will soon be educated in the most recent information about narcotics in this area by the Dearborn County Sheriff's department. Together, we will work to do our best to observe and curb the drug abuse by our youth. Should any parent want to drug test their children, confidential and personal drug test kits are available upon request from the office.

Thanks for supporting your school.

*Mr. Robert Shipley*  
*Sunman-Dearborn East Central High*  
*School Principal*

## CAROL HESTER A BELOVED TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBER WILL BE FOREVER MISSED



S-DIS and the Sunman-Dearborn community lost a wonderful person to cancer in early August. Carol Hester dedicated her entire life to serving the community, especially the children of special needs in Sunman-Dearborn Community Schools. We are honoring Carol with the following projects:

There will be a scholarship fund established in Carol's behalf to be awarded annually to an East Central special needs student pursuing a higher education beyond high school.

Donations can be written to :

### **The Carol Hester Special Education Scholarship Award.**

There will also be a collection of school supplies and money to support **Carol's Closet**. These items and funds will be used to support needy children at S-DIS. Donations can be directed to S-DIS.

Forever in our hearts-  
Thank You, Carol!

## SAFETY AT THE BES CROSSWALK

We went a few weeks without incident but once again several concerns have been witnessed recently at BES in the morning.

Please be extremely safe at student drop off and be aware of and honor the crosswalks.

Here are 3 specific examples of unsafe behavior witnessed recently:

- Elementary age child exits the car and is not safely away from his own car, his own parent pulls away and almost hit his own child.
- SDIS or SDMS age students are running late for transfer bus, they are let out by their parent and the two students run across the cross walk not paying attention, nor did they look either way. Almost got hit by a different car.
- Parent lets her child exit her own car, driver side unsupervised by the parent, a car passes and almost hits the car door.

### Solution ?

Be careful, slow down, watch your child as well as others. Teach your children to look both ways when going through the crosswalk. Try not to be late if your children ride a transfer bus to SDIS, SDMS or ECHS. If your child is exiting from the driver side of a car, please get out of the car and assist them to the curb. Have your child exit curb-side.

I have requested the crosswalks to be re-lined so that they show up better and have also requested that a large cross-walk sign be placed in the island near our main crosswalk. We at BES have experienced a huge increase in the number of BES/SDIS/SDMS/ECHS parents who drop off their children at BES to avoid a bus ride. Please be careful.

*Mr. Norbert Goessling  
Sunman-Dearborn Bright  
Elementary School Principal*



## PROTECTING OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES

School safety is at the forefront of everyone's mind. With stories about violence at schools being reported in the news at an all too frequent rate, school employees and parents alike wonder, "What more can be done to ensure our students' safety at school?" At North Dearborn we strive each day to make our school the safest it can be. Yes, we have doors that automatically lock and video surveillance equipment that allows online viewing by our school resource officer, but we also employ many low tech safety procedures as well. Our head custodian, Rick Singer, is quick to clean up spills, repair leaky faucets, respond to playground concerns and attend to the routine maintenance of our building. All of these measures help to make the school grounds safe for our students and staff. We have a fleet of bus drivers that maintain safe and efficient transportation for our students so that they can arrive at school safely. Teachers are trained to respond to both the routine and the not so routine emergencies at school. We have a nurse on duty everyday here at school to attend to the medical needs of our students. With all of these in place, we still rely heavily on the parents of our students to assist in providing a safe environment here at North Dearborn. Below you will find three ways that parents can help the school provide a safe environment.

**Sign in at the office.** We require all parents/visitors to sign in at the front office before walking to the classroom. This helps us to be sure we know who is walking in our hallways. If you come in with your child, expect to sign in at the office before walking them to the class.

**Follow safety procedures when dropping off students in the morning.** Many of our students are dropped off in the morning by their parents. When dropping off, it is very important that parents drive slowly. Students should exit the car only when the car pulls up to the curb in front of the door. Students

should not exit the car from the driver's side where they will be stepping out into traffic. Anyone coming to school during bus hours must use the Sawdon Ridge entrance.

**When sending birthday treats, send only store bought treats with ingredients clearly marked.** Many students have food allergies. While making homemade cupcakes or other treats is fun for you and your child, we cannot guarantee the ingredients do not contain these allergens. Our corporation wellness policy requires treats brought to school be only store bought items. Following this policy ensures that all students will be able to avoid an allergic reaction to food received here at school.

Together we can work to create the safest environment possible for our students.

*Mr. Jeff Bond  
Sunman-Dearborn  
North Dearborn School Principal*



## SCHOOL SAFETY: RIDING THE BUS TO SCHOOL SAFELY

We do drills for all safety reasons at SDIS (fire, tornado, earthquake, lockdown), but did you know that the buses also do safety drills/evacuations? Here are some additional points to discuss with your child(ren) on bus safety. We want all students to have the safest transportation.

### *Getting on the school bus*

- When the bus arrives, stand at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb.
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road until you are five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus. Then you can cross the street.
- Be sure the bus driver can see you and you can see the bus driver.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up first because the driver may not be able to see you.

### *Behavior on the bus*

- When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver and is not allowed.
- Never put head, arms or hands out of the window.
- Keep aisles clear—books, bags, and feet/legs are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
- Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together.
- At your stop, **wait for the bus to stop completely** before getting up from your seat, then walk to the front door and exit, using the handrail.

### *Getting off the school bus*

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus

along the side of the road until you can turn around see the driver.

- Make sure the bus driver can see you.
- Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the wheels of the bus at all times.

*Mrs. Chris Vennemeier*  
*Sunman-Dearborn Intermediate*  
*School Principal*





## SUNMAN-DEARBORN MIDDLE SCHOOL

### NEWS

The last few weeks have been full of many fun and educational opportunities at SDMS. We had a very successful Grandparent/Grand-friend Day with over 120 visitors who came to eat lunch with their middle school students. In addition, we are working diligently to complete our Acuity and STAR assessments in order to establish baselines for growth in student achievement over the coming months. Our teachers have participated in a lot of professional development to learn how to use renaissance math and language programs consistently throughout the year in order to compliment other teaching strategies in the classroom. Our Language Arts department has embraced the Criterion Writing program in order to supplement our writing curriculum. We thank our parents and students for their patience as we learn this new system which will inevitably enhance our students' writing skills. We hope to expand this writing initiative to other subject areas as the year continues.

Eighty-four middle school students enjoyed our first Pack the House dance and game. We also started our school-wide fundraiser which will benefit all of our students with 40% of all sales coming back to SDMS. The fundraiser ends on September 30. We have an advisory room competition occurring in conjunction with the fundraiser! The advisory with the highest sales average per student will have the opportunity to "Splat the Principal, Assistant Principal, and volunteering teachers!" Everyone is looking forward to this chance.

Our attendance rate at SDMS is much improved over last year as we enter the month of October. Most days we have 96% -97%. We have even had 98% on a few occasions this year! I want to thank parents for working with SDMS administration to make attendance a priority! We also conducted our bullying surveys with all students and staff, as well as, many parents. In the coming weeks, our staff will be reviewing this data to shape our programs and supports to Stomp Out Bullying. In

addition, all students participated in advisory activities to inform them about bullying, the consequences of it, and some prevention strategies. Our Journalism class has been actively teaching our students how to handle bullying situations on our weekly News You Can Use that airs every Friday during advisory. The same class has a group of students who work to compile our monthly SDMS Newsletter.

We invite parents and community members to attend our upcoming fall concerts to experience the talent of our students. You will not be disappointed if you come to the performing arts center on **October 7 at 6:30 p.m.** to watch our SDMS chorus classes perform. You will be equally entertained on **October 29 at 7:00 p.m.** if you come listen to our SDMS band performance.

Picture retakes are scheduled for **October 29, 2013**. If you were not satisfied with your child's picture just return the packet on that day and request that your child's picture be retaken. In addition, if your child was not present on the initial picture day this will be their last chance to have photos taken. FCCLA, Unity Group, FFA, SIC (Science Investigation Club), Yearbook staff, as well as, our many athletic teams are offering great opportunities for our students to be involved in many activities throughout the year. Please encourage your child to be active in extra-curricular at SDMS!

Lastly, SDMS will be conducting parent-teacher conferences on **October 22& 24 from 3:10-7:10 p.m.** Teachers will be contacting parents whose children could most benefit from a meeting between their parents and teacher. We look forward to seeing our parents at this time.

*Mrs. Lisa Baudendistel*  
*Sunman-Dearborn Middle*  
*School Principal*



## SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

When we see natural disasters, violence, and terroristic behavior on the news as a regular occurrence, you may wonder about the safety in our local schools. Student safety is a priority at Sunman Elementary.

Students and staff participate in regular safety drills. We hold monthly fire drills as well as two tornado drills and one man-made disaster drill per semester. Just like practicing multiplication facts helps make the information 'permanent' in our brains, so does practicing a variety of drills. Each October, the Sunman Rural Fire Department coordinates a fire drill with Sunman Elementary in which the fire department responds with emergency vehicles. The fire fighters advise the school on safety measures to be taken in the school, and they also present fire prevention information to students.

Thanks to safety grants and the work of our corporation's IT department, Sunman Elementary now has a system to limit access to the building during the school day. Once the tardy bell rings, there are no unlocked exterior doors to access the inside of the school. A buzzer system with video and audio monitors allows school office personnel

to screen visitors to the building.

Each classroom contains an "Emergency Bucket" filled with first aid items and emergency equipment. Teachers have easy access to the buckets if they are needed. This precaution is paired with an emergency binder that contains important student information as well as a procedure manual for a wide variety of emergencies.

Finally, each principal in the Sunman-Dearborn School Corporation, as well as the Director of Student Services, is a certified School Safety Specialist. Safety Specialists must have yearly training to maintain their certification. The training varies from year to year, but covers safety issues ranging from tornadoes to cyber-bullying.

*Ms. Cindy Morton*  
*Sunman Elementary*  
*School Principal*





## A NEWSLETTER FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS OF SUNMAN-DEARBORN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

### Sunman-Dearborn Community Schools

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Phone: 812-623-2291

Fax: 812-623-3341

The mission of S-DCS is to develop, for all students:

- Literacy skills (reading, writing, communicating confidently)
- Mastery of state and national standards
- Character, responsibility, teamwork, the importance of regular attendance, goal-directedness, and service to community
- High graduation rates and post-secondary success

We are on the web at  
[www.sunmandearborn.k12.in.us](http://www.sunmandearborn.k12.in.us)



## SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

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