From the Superintendent

As we approach Thanksgiving, I believe we are all a little more encouraged to give thanks for our many blessings in life. We may even comment a little more frequently about the things we are thankful for as we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, eat (too much) and spend time with family and friends.

... as I began thinking about how this time of year brings on the giving of thanks, I began jotting down the list of things that I am thankful for, specifically.

- My faith
- My wife, Joni
- My health
- Our staff members...
- Our CARING staff members...
- The dedication of our staff members
- Kind words
- Opportunities to touch lives
- Resources we have
- Supportive parents
- Supportive community members

These are just a couple of the things that I am thankful for on the lengthy list that I started. Thanksgiving is a unique holiday because it is an important time, if none other, to give thanks.

If giving thanks, however, has become a little cliche’ or lost some meaning - whether it be this time of year or throughout the year, I encourage you to try and add some specific meaning behind your gratitude and remind yourself why these things are important to you or why they are reasons to be thankful. There is no better time than the present to be thankful!

Here is what that can look like:

- **My faith**: because even when things are not as I may have planned (or when bad things happen), my faith reminds me the good work that has been started is not done. I am thankful for a faith of strength and refuge.
- **My wife, Joni**: because she is my partner in life; she is my counsel and friend. She is a listener, offers guidance, supports me and we encourage one another to bring good to each other in ways that lift one another up. I am thankful for a wife of compassion and love.
- **Kind words**: because kind words heal wounds, soften hearts, shine light into darkness and bring change to people (hearts), communities, cultures and the world. Kindness is something that everyone is capable of and no one should be excluded from. I am thankful for kindness that restores.
From the Superintendent [cont.]

I think you get where I am going. Is it fair to say Thanksgiving is/can be more than a holiday to eat good food, lounge in the comfort of home or family and watch football on television? To me, Thanksgiving is a reminder that change can happen simply by giving thanks.

As you break for a much deserved holiday, I challenge you to find a way to give thanks in a manner greater than words and more powerful than for a moment in time. Give thanks and spread gratitude. The impact can be more grand than imaginable.

...but before I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving, I would be remiss if I did not close by saying, “I am thankful for you. Your dedication and commitment to our district is one I do not take lightly. Our journey to serve others is one that I could not take alone. Without you, and the hours you give, the contributions you make, the support you provide and the pride you maintain, we could not educate the more than seventeen hundred students that choose us to have a role in their lives for the good of teaching students of today to make a difference in the world of tomorrow. My thanks for you is beyond words but enjoy your rest this week knowing you are making a difference and I am giving many thanks for you.

Brent Lehman,
Superintendent
Message from the Nurse’s Desk:

Nurse Laura Linder at Bellmont Elementary/Middle School wishes to extend a BIG THANK YOU to all of the teachers and staff!

As a new staff member this year, she has felt overwhelming support and assistance from her team in helping her transition into her role as the school nurse.

She even says, “I want to give a special thanks to the awesome secretaries and guidance counselors, too! They pitch in and help with students and I couldn’t ask for a better team!”

Nurse Linder wishes to extend a sincere thank you to John and Susie Fuelling, as well, for donation much needed clothes for our students.

She adds, “What a great place to work!”

Way to go, Bellmont!!

Open Positions

We have a few open positions for employment in our district. If you are interested in being considered, internally, or know someone who would be great to join our team, we encourage you (or invite them) to visit our website to learn more about these exciting opportunities at North Adams!

- MS Boys Head Soccer Coach
- Cafeteria Server/Cashier/Dishwasher
- Bus Driver[s]
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Interpreter
- School Psychologist
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teacher
- Substitute Custodian
Info from Central Office

Insurance Deductions - December Payroll:

All staff are being asked to review their deductions on the December 6th pay and notify us if there is an error. Please ensure that all of the insurance premiums are coming out for the plans you signed up for, and that they are the correct amounts. If you have canceled a plan[s] and you continue to see a deduction, please notify us immediately, as well.

Please note: December deductions begin paying for January’s premiums.

There were a lot of changes for 2020. Here is a recap of what has changed and what deductions to make sure are correct and/or not there if waived, cancelled or terminated:

- **GIB:** for staff who increased their voluntary term life insurance through AUL/One America – or – moved up into another age bracket (All staff that have this received a form).
- **Life Insurance:** we removed two additional options (American Fidelity life and Texas Life). Again, you should be billed at home for 2020, and if you wish to keep the policy(ies), you can pay them directly.
- **American Fidelity:** changes that you made to your coverages (add/drop/change plans/premium changes); cancer, critical illness, accident, short-term disability, flex (FSA), and dependent care.
- **HSA:** we removed this option with American Fidelity, and now only use First Merchants Bank. We are no longer sending contributions to American Fidelity. Anyone can sign up at any time for a HSA if you have a high deductible health plan.
- **Health:** increases in premiums/changed plans/dropped plans
- **Vision/Dental:** changes in premiums for dental and vision plans through Humana/EyeMed.

continued on pg. 2
**Insurance Deductions [cont.]:**

*Don’t forget: The SEBT changed health carriers from Aetna to United Healthcare, and our claims administrator from Allied to UMR. Info has been emailed out regarding how to search for providers on the new network for 2020. Watch out for more information!*

A lot has changed in a few short weeks. By reviewing your deductions, we will be able to ensure that all of the changes that have made and downloaded information that was sent to is correct. We appreciate your diligence in helping us review all of your deductions for accuracy.

In general, insurance companies will only refund a couple months of premiums. So this is very important to review your deductions to help us ensure that we did not miss anything. With as many changes as we receive at the end of the year, it’s possible some may be missed. Please help us help you!

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**Salary Increases & 403(b) Contributions:**

Your employer match (1%) increases along with your salary; however, you must contribute a minimum of 1% into your 403(b) to be able to receive this match. If you have received an email from Lyndsy stating that you need to increase your contribution, please complete that form and return it as soon as possible.

Access a form in the Personnel Information Services section of the website.

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**Retiring?:**

If you are planning to retire at the end of 2019, please contact Lyndsy Hildebrandt as soon as possible to begin your exit paperwork.

Contact Lyndsy at ext. 2105.

**Heart Healthy Options:**

With Thanksgiving approaching, the American Heart Association published some heart healthy recipes to consider for the holidays!

Check out the recipes! The acorn squash wedges with walnuts looks like a decadent dish!
Welcome to our New Staff

**Holland Melton - Food and Nutrition Services**
Holland joined us on 11/13 as a Food and Nutrition Services team member.

Holland was born in Killeen, Texas. She is the daughter of a U.S. Army veteran. During his time of service, Holland moved around the country. She has lived in Arizona, California and Hawaii. Since moving from Hawaii, Holland has lived here in Decatur.

Holland is married to her husband of 7 years. They have an 11-year old daughter named Skyelar.

Welcome to the team, Holland!

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**Teresa Gephart - PreK Special Education Paraprofessional**
Teresa joined us on 11/25 as a preschool special education paraprofessional at Bellmont Elementary. She will be working Monday-Friday. She joins us with experience working in a preschool/PreK setting.

Teresa recently married her husband, Derek, in July 2018. They are excited to share they are expecting their first child in April 2020! How exciting!

When asked what she likes to do in her spare-time, Teresa shares she enjoys camping and reading novels.

Welcome to the Bellmont family, Teresa!
Happy Birthday!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/1 - Robin Everett
12/4 - Jenna Schmidt
12/8 - Marty Ballard
12/8 - Laura Linder
12/9 - Marisa Mailloux
12/9 - Mark Andrews
12/9 - Jane Beery
12/10 - Kristina Quinn
12/14 - Ann Burkhalter
12/14 - Nick Hall
12/16 - Darlene Hitchcock
12/18 - Kellie Smith
12/23 - Prayer Hirn
12/23 - Nina Mowery
12/25 - Mark Bulmahn
12/26 - Ryan Thompson
12/26 - Lyndsy Hildebrandt
12/27 - Jeremy Wiseheart
12/28 - Leah Thompson
12/28 - Jenny Dick
12/30 - Bea Brewer
Message of the Month:

This month, the Message of the Month is a bit of a “businessy” message. After returning to education from the business world, I have often wrestled with differences and similarities between the two. One thing that is important to point out, however, is, regardless of where you are - you need good leaders on your team. In fact, the success of a company (or in our case, district), relies on its team members to demonstrate positive leadership qualities that contribute to the overall health of our (or the) company. But there is an unspoken backdrop that can (gradually or rapidly) discourage a culture of leadership and dissuade good employees from being greater employees.

... That backdrop? In spoken conversation and/or written exchanges, we have used the terms “management,” “leadership” and “administration” so interchangeably that it creates the confusion that because one is not in “management” or “administration,” they, therefore, are not in “leadership.” Often times, employees/staff get hung up on the semantics of “leadership” and “management” (or, again in our case, “administration”) and lose sight of the power they have to lead regardless of the role they hold...

Staff feel powerless to lead because they are not in a position of authority. It becomes easy to say “I am not in charge, that’s not my job” or “unless I am in charge, I can’t _______(you fill in the blank).”

The good news? Leadership is not exclusive to those with fancy titles or positions of authority. *Read that again.* Maybe even in your own experiences, you’ve found those that “lead” out of authority are less effective than those that lead out of humility. In the book, Developing the Leader Within You, by John Maxwell, those leaders are described as “Positional Leaders.” Their “security is based on title, not talent” and they feel “in control” because of “appointment to a position” (of authority). You may even find “Positional Leaders” garner less respect because it is a “I” mentality instead of a “We” mentality.

So as I have been reading various articles and listening to podcasts on leadership, I began thinking about leadership vs. management. As I started thinking about ways that staff can lead outside of management, I began to create a list of the qualities that leaders exhibit. As I was sorting talents in one pocket or another, I found that I was aligning all of the qualities of a leader with influential habits - and I was aligning all of the qualities of a manager with “directional” skills you develop to operate a business. In essence, leaders are everywhere...

...All of that to say, you are a leader, too. Leadership is the ability to influence those around. Your influence and reverence can take place in any position, at any time, simply by the actions, behaviors, words and the performance you demonstrate in your every day encounters. The more we can use our ability to lead for the good of those around you/us - our district, our students, our parents, our community and our guests - the better we can be!

*The caveat there is, leaders can lead with good intentions and people can lead with poor intentions and steer derail the culture of an organization, too. It is up to you to be a good leader and surround yourself with those that help and not hurt our forward progress. Nevertheless, leaders are everywhere.*

As I have been reading about leadership, I started a list of the things I look for in those that lead well. Although it takes a good leader to be a manager, it does not take a manager to be a leader...We all have the power to lead.... Be thinking of the ways you can or do lead those around you with good intentions & keep on leading!
LEADER:
- Is honest and has integrity
- Demonstrates by example
- Is empathetic and genuine; has concern for others and places others above themselves; selfless; compassionate; cognizant of others
- Encourages others, empowers others; develops leadership skills in others
- Is focused on “we” not “me”
- Inspires people and thinking to advance ideas, visions and the overall strength of the company; guides others; pushes the bar higher for themselves and others
- Respectful; engages in diplomatic discourse
- Is committed and passionate about what they do and who they serve - “great leaders tend to stick around - they’re in it for the long haul” and not focused on “climbing the ladder”
- Believes and trusts in the process (see above)
- Works well with others for the good of the organization; cohesive; charismatic
- Is creative, innovative, adaptable/flexible and willing to accept new approaches (or someone else’s ideas) to turn them into good practice
- Embraces mistakes or opportunities to improve and is dedicated to seeking solutions and better processes
- Optimistic - believes they and the people around them can create and be the change and influences others to feel the same
- Is appreciative of the people and the general processes around them
- Open-minded; influences viewpoints with tact

MANAGER:
- Provides the roadmap for the company/district; connects company strengths to goals and outcomes; has a strong, clear vision
- Communicates well, clearly
- Emotionally resilient; has managerial courage; is able to take command; decisive; is able to make tough decisions (or unpopular decisions)
- Responsible for the company and those that are responsible for; accepts successes and failures;
- Recognizes progress (doesn’t just focus on results)
- Accepts pressures of business; manages the ebbs and flows/ups and downs
- Is organized, thorough
- Able to work independently and is self-driven; effective time management
- Directs forward progress; Works with leaders to discuss and create change
- Has a positive rapport with employees, customers, stakeholders
- Handles pressure; thinks clearly under pressure; accepts risks/adversities
- Analytical; evaluates strengths and weakness and has sound decision-making skills; strong cognitive approaches
- Experienced; has a track-record of success
- Delegates responsibilities and serves as a resource to support employees with knowledge and guidance; coaches
- Provides a system of checks and balances; is fair and reliable
- Is a continual learner; evolves

Simply, rather than equating leadership to management - let’s equate leadership to influencing. A leader influences someone or something (preferably for the good). A good leader is the humility and backbone of the organization. When the company has good leaders, everyone benefits. We are all leaders. It’s a big list. You don’t have to be all of the above but in what ways can you go forth and lead for the good of our district?......

Inspire good and lead!

Quote of the Month:
“Leadership is absolutely about inspiring action, but it is also about guarding against mis-action.”
- Simon Sinek
Lessons for Life!

The Bellmont High School National Honor Society recently held a Food & Toiletry Collection Drive to collect non-perishable food items and toiletries for area organizations in need.

At the end of the drive, around 50 boxes of donated items from students and staff in grades PK-12 were collected. The items have been delivered to various food banks in Adams County, Golden Meadows Home, Woodcrest and the Shepherd’s House.

Our Bellmont students and staff are committed to serving our community year-after-year with generous hearts. Whether it be through relief efforts after a natural disaster or outreach efforts to serve our local community, our Bellmont Braves has a passion and heart to give, love others and serve with generosity!

Thank you, Bellmont, for serving others!