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# Education News

BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS • BELLEVUE, NEBRASKA

www.BellevuePublicSchools.org

December 7, 2012

## Ginger Rogers & Brad Wellmann recognized for “Making a Difference”

Bellevue Public Schools “Making a Difference” award was presented to Fort Crook Elementary Schools’ Ginger Rogers, 6th grade teacher and Brad Wellmann, 4th grade teacher.

On January 24, 2012, Mary Beth Sueppel-Hewitt and her family had a house fire. During this time of tragedy Ginger and Brad stepped up to help Mary Beth and her family.



Superintendent Frank Harwood and Megan Finn, of Great Western Bank (right), present Ginger Rogers and Brad Wellmann with their check. Mary Beth Sueppel-Hewitt (left) nominated Rogers and Wellmann.

Ginger went to a local clothing store and purchased business casual clothes for Mary Beth. “I am blessed every day because these clothes are what I wear most days to work...” said Mary Beth. “Because of her, I was able to go back to work dressed for success and focus on my job during a very trying time.” Ginger was also Mary Beth’s sons’ sixth grade teacher, going above and beyond to help him learn and be successful. As Mary Beth stated, Ginger’s “day did not end when school let out.”

When Brad learned of the fire, he obtained a grant to assist each of Mary Beth’s children with school supplies, clothes, and shoes. “We were so blessed because what they were wearing at the time was all that they had...” said Mary Beth. “He took his personal time to go shopping and

deliver the clothes...”

“My children and I are so blessed to have educators like these two and all the others who also gave...” said Mary Beth.

Ginger serves or has served with the Fort Crook Student Council, SOS, and as an Instructional Leader. Brad also serves or has served with the Fort Crook Student Council, the Safety Patrol, and past-president of the BEA.

In recognition of their outstanding efforts going above and beyond to make a difference in lives of students and staff, Frank Harwood, Superintendent of Bellevue Public Schools, in partnership with Great Western Bank, surprised Ginger and Brad with a check for \$125 each.

All “Making a Difference” award nominees for October received a copy of their nominations.

## Local Author Donates to Bellevue Public Schools

Bellevue’s Dr. Laura A. Hansen, a Creighton University Medical School professor, is donating 10 percent of her books’ sales to public schools, mainly BPS. Her young adult novel, “Cruise of the Undead,” features adventures of kids and zombies on a South Pacific cruise ship, where “brains love zombies and zombies love brains.”

The brainy kids are based on her son Jack and others who also attend some of the BPS schools.

On Saturday, December 8, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Hansen will be signing books at the Bakers Store in Twin Creek. “Cruise of the Undead” can be purchased at all Bakers stores and on Amazon.

School librarians say the book is popular with ages from upper elementary school through high school; while adults may also find it to be a good read.

THIS  
ISSUE

**Nebraska Ranks  
Public School Districts  
First Time Ever,  
Historic Event**

**Bravo,  
Bellevue!**

## Nebraska Ranks Public School Districts First Time Ever, Historic Event

November, 2012 will go down in Nebraska history: The Nebraska Department of Education, following a legislative mandate, ranked Nebraska's 249 school districts from top to bottom.

Nebraska's Public Schools, created 157 years ago, have survived the Civil War, two world wars, other wars, the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, recessions, immigration, and good times and bad times without ranking public school districts.

Now, Nebraska's Unicameral, the only one in the United States, jumped on the federal top-down, reform-the-public-schools' bandwagon and voted to rank the schools to save the United States.

The Department of Education ranked schools more than one way. Districts were ranked nine ways, so the top and bottom districts on one ranking would not be the same on the other eight.

The rankings for Nebraska Public Schools are in the following categories: Reading, Math, Science, Writing, Reading Improvement, Math Improvement, Reading Growth, Math Growth, and High School Graduation Rate.

### Teachers Share with Teachers - An Academic Imperative

"If school districts really buy into the rankings (of school districts)," said Mr. Harwood to the Bellevue Leader, "it would limit our collaboration between districts. I am going to be happy for all the districts that are doing well."

Harwood said he wants other districts to do well and that they do well in Nebraska. He warned that rankings "pitting districts against each other" would hinder the progress of education.

This position echoes one of the important moral imperatives of education that is as old as the Greeks. It is in the Hippocratic Oath. Our academic journals are based on this moral imperative. Educational conferences are based on this moral imperative. Chaucer's scholar "would gladly learn and gladly teach." Sharing an idea with a teacher down the hall is based on this moral imperative. Academic sharing passes on and advances knowledge.

When Jonas Salk accepted the Nobel Prize for discoveries to proven polio and its epidemics, he thanked the many people, living and dead, who had shared their knowledge with him and his team who put some of the final pieces of a scientific puzzle together.

Academic sharing is a moral imperative. Academic sharing takes joy in the academic success of others. "Gladly learn and gladly teach."

## BPS Continues to Excel

Bellevue Superintendent Frank Harwood shares the following thoughts about the recent rankings of Nebraska's 249 school districts:

"The recently released Nebraska Accountability results only reinforce what we already know. We have made tremendous growth and improvement with math achievement, but we still have work to do. Our reading performance is pretty good, but we are not seeing all of the growth improvement that we would like. The students and staff are working very hard, and we are seeing some very positive results."

"I am very confident that Bellevue Public Schools will continue to provide an excellent education for all of our students."

## BPS Graduation Rates Exceed State and U. S. Averages

On November 20 and November 26, the Nebraska and the U. S. Departments of Education released rankings of four-year cohort high school graduation rates.

U. S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan stated that their 2011 study lacks three states' data. The Department's stricter guidelines caused 26 states to have declining graduation rates with 24 states having the same or increasing rates. Duncan stated that declining scores should not be called regression and that increasing scores this year should not be called progress.

Iowa had the highest graduation rate of 88 percent. Vermont and Wisconsin tied at 87 percent. Nebraska and five other states followed with scores of 86 percent, with the national four-year average about 75 percent.

A U. S. Census Bureau survey says 85 percent of all Americans 25 years of age and older have high school diplomas.

BPS has East and West high schools and adult education programs. Some federally approved special needs students attend public schools like BPS until they are 21 years of age.

No ranking credit is given to Bellevue's adult education program, that dates to an agreement with Offutt in the 1950s, to provide a high school diploma program for World War II servicemen who wanted diplomas so they could attend college on the G. I. bill. Many adults graduate from this program every year.

Harwood's conclusion on BPS graduation rates is correct: "Being ranked 116th (in Nebraska) does not sound good, it really is. When you have a district of this size, we're going to tend toward the average. Being 116th in Nebraska would still put you in a very good position nationally."

Nationally Nebraska ranked fifth with an 86 percent four-year graduation rate. Nebraska has a graduation rate of 87.61 percent. BPS has a 90.69 percent rate with two large high schools and a mobile student population.

# Bravo, Bellevue!

## Bellevue West Forensics - November Tournaments

West competed in the Millard West Novice Tournament on November 9, 2012. Capturing 1st in Dramatic Interpretation, Callie Pancoe, and taking 2nd in Dramatic Interpretation, Delaney Jackson.

West competed in the Papillion-La Vista Tournament on November 10, 2012. Taking 3rd in Novice Humorous Interpretation, Tyler Araujo.

West competed in the Pius X/Lincoln East Novice Tournament on November 17, 2012. Capturing 3rd in Novice Humorous Interpretation, Tyler Araujo.

West competed in the Omaha Westside GOLD Tournament on November 30, 2012. Taking 2nd in Dramatic Interpretation, Delaney Jackson.



Bellevue Public Schools will begin using MyLunchMoney on December 17, 2012. This is an online service for parents to prepay and/or monitor their students' breakfast, lunch, and a la carte food items purchased at school.

### **No more worries about running out of money on your lunch account!**

MyLunchMoney is a convenient option for the parents and students in our District. It allows parents to access their student's breakfast/lunch account online, including deposits into accounts using a credit/debit card and viewing account information. You can say goodbye to the days of wondering how much money is left in the account or what your student is eating for breakfast/lunch.

### **Not interested in using a debit/credit card at this time!**

Parents can still create an online account to check account balances, view their students' purchases, and set spending limits.

### **Benefits to you include:**

- **Easy** – Enrolling and funding is simple and completely done online.
- **Convenient** – Once an account is established, parents can check balances, view student purchases, set spending limits, and fund a student's account all online.
- **Secure** – Parent's personal and payment card information is protected by the most advanced internet security.
- **Automatic** – If parents choose the Smart Pay option, money will always be in their student's account. When a balance is reached, money is automatically deposited.

### **Enrolling in MyLunchMoney**

Before parents enroll, they will need to obtain the ID number for each of their students. Parents will receive this information from their student's school. Once parents have obtained the student ID number, it's easy to enroll. To begin, go to Bellevue Public Schools website, [www.bellevuepublicschools.org](http://www.bellevuepublicschools.org) and click on the feature button at the top of the website called "MyLunchMoney." Once on MyLunchMoney's website, select "Register for an Account" and follow the steps through the registration process.

We know parents will enjoy the convenience of making online deposits, checking the account balances, viewing purchases, etc. Remember, there is no cost to enroll in this service; however, if deposits are made into accounts using a credit/debit card there is a \$1.95 processing fee per school for each transaction. For more information, please refer to the Q & A on the Bellevue Public Schools website [www.bellevuepublicschools.org](http://www.bellevuepublicschools.org).

# District Calendar

- Dec. 20** East/West Girls Varsity Basketball @ West, 5:30 p.m.  
East/West Boys Varsity Basketball @ West, 7:15 p.m.
- Dec. 21** End of Second Quarter (early dismissal)
- Dec. 24 - Jan. 4** Holiday Break (no school)
- Jan. 7** School resumes
- Jan. 21** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)



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## New Law in California Changes School Evaluation

California Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill reducing the use of student standardized test scores from 100 percent to 60 percent in the California Performance Index that is used to evaluate individual public schools. School quality measurements must now include other factors in the Index.

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Please send contributions to Phil Kaldahl, Editor, at the Welcome Center or email [bps@bpsne.net](mailto:bps@bpsne.net)

*"The best way to predict the future is to create it."* ~ Peter F. Drucker

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