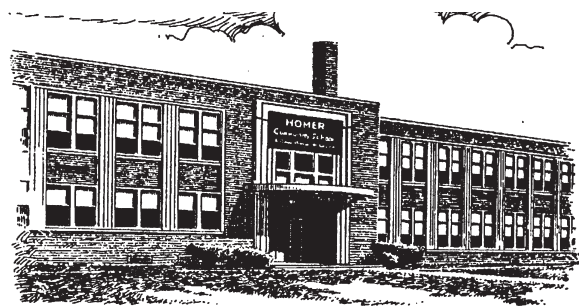


HOMER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

SECOND SEMESTER 2009-2010

NEWSLETTER



From the Superintendent

Homer Community Schools is committed to strengthening communication with our parents and community at large using new and innovative pathways. Using the Homer Index to distribute our winter newsletter is one of these ideas. This new forum will allow a cost savings and a general distribution to the Homer area. Copies of the newsletter will be available in the superintendent's office and on the district's website at homerschools.net. We would like to hear your input on the change to the newsletter.

Homer Community Schools has implemented a calling system called SchoolMessenger, which will call every student's home in the event of a school cancellation or delay. We will begin using the system to contact particular grades about important announcements and reminders such as field trips or fundraisers. The School-Messenger system was tested before winter break and initial reaction was positive. If you would like the system to call a different number, send an e-mail, or a text message, those features are also available. Please contact your student's respective school office to change the contact number. As a side note, school closing announcements will continue to be broadcast on local television and radio stations.

Parents and students in the middle school and high school can check grades and student progress using Parent Viewer. This feature of our on-line grade book is available anytime and allows up-to-date grades and attendance for all of a student's classes. If you would like more information on Parent Viewer, please contact the technology department at 568-4461.

As always, a one-on-one conversation with school staff is encouraged when questions about school or a student arises. A phone call or an e-mail are both effective means of contacting teachers and principals to set up an appointment. All phone numbers and e-mail addresses of school staff are available on the school website at homerschools.net.

In closing, I want to recognize that school funding in Michigan continues to be challenging. Many changes have occurred at Homer Community Schools and will continue to occur as we navigate these rough waters. Communication will be the key for our school to maintain our past successes. Please support all of our school personnel as they take on the challenges of educating our children. Again, thank you for making Homer 'The Destination District.'

*Rob Ridgeway
Superintendent*

School Closings

The announcement of school closings due to hazardous conditions will be made beginning at 6:00 a.m. on:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| WUFN (96.5 FM) | WNWN (98.5 FM) |
| Q106 (106 FM) | WKFR (103.1 FM) |
| WSAE (106.9) | WQLR (106.5 FM) |
| WILX (TV 10) | WOOD (TV 8) |
| WWMT (TV 3) | WLAJ (TV 53) |
| FOX 47 (TV 47) | WLNA (TV 6) |

Please do not call the school!

Homer FFA News

JANUARY 2010

28 Pre-District Leadership Contests at Homer (only Homer), 3:30 p.m. to approx. 6:30 p.m., Parents welcome to watch.

FEBRUARY 2010

4 District Leadership Contests, 5 p.m. at Branch Area Career Center, Coldwater
12 National FFA College Scholarships due (Seniors - complete online at http://www.ffa.org/index.cfm?method=c_programs.Scholarships)
18 Regional Leadership Contests, 5 p.m. at Olivet
22-26 National FFA Week, activities all week long
TBA Winter Reward Trip (for FFA members who competed at Districts)

MARCH 2010

4 Deadline-Chapter award applications (Outstanding, Star Farmer, Chapter Proficiency...)
4 Deadline for Homer FFA Alumni College Scholarship Applications
4 Parent's Meeting, 6 p.m., Ag Room (Informational meeting, all parents are encouraged to attend one parent meeting per year)
4 Alumni Meeting, 7 p.m., Ag Room (All are welcome - any supporter of FFA & Ag Ed)
10-12 State FFA Convention (Wednesday - Friday)

APRIL 2010

16 State FFA Career Development Events (Ag Skills Contests) - MSU
21-23 Regional Camp (for new officers) - Augusta
MAY 2010
TBA FFA Awards Banquet 2 p.m. (2:30 p.m. Dinner), MS Gym
13 Alumni Meeting, 7 p.m., Ag Room (All are welcome - any supporter of FFA & Ag Ed)

14 The following items are due to the State FFA Office:
American Degree Applications
28 Plant Sale, noon-3:30 p.m. at school (need parent help) and 4-6 p.m. at Water Tower Park
29 Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to noon at Water Tower Park
29 Brunch set-up, 1-3 p.m. (at school cafeteria/ag room)
31 Pancake Brunch, 7 a.m. to noon (Need LOTS of help - ALL members & parents)
31 Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to noon, at school

JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2010

SLCCO, POA Camp, Dairy Showmanship, Dairy Judging, Tractor Driving, Canoe Trip, Point System Trip, Fair Parking, Fair Booth, Chapter & Alumni Bonfire/Picnic, YPCS (Young People Citizenship Seminar) - week-long conference in Midland, MI, WLC (Washington Leadership Conference) - week-long conference in Washington, DC

*Lora Finch
Homer Agriscience Instructor
& FFA Advisor*

Elementary News

As we near the second half of the school year, we'd like to give you the following information so that you will be able to plan accordingly. As usual, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, please don't hesitate to stop in or call the elementary office.

HOUSEKEEPING

Just a reminder that the children will need to stay on the cement during recess if they are not wearing boots and snow pants. We do have some winter clothing items that have been donated. Please call the elementary office if we can be of assistance. As spring approaches, please remember that weather at this time of year is very unpredictable. Please be sure that your child wears a coat to school every day. Even though the weatherman may predict a warm day, it is often still chilly during morning recess. We don't have nearly enough coats to loan to all the children. As soon as it begins to warm up and there are signs of spring, we have children who want to leave their coat in the classroom. I want you to be aware of the guidelines I have given our recess supervisors. If a child wears a coat to school he/she must wear it outdoors if it is below 60 degrees. In the past there have been questions regarding students wearing shorts to school. Please refer to page two of the Elementary

Handbook regarding the dress code. It states, "Students should dress according to weather conditions. Boys and girls may wear shorts which fall near the knee level. 'Short' shorts and clothing that is disruptive to the educational process is not allowed." Avoid sending students to school in tops which are very short and show the stomach, and tops that are loose with lower necks which often aren't appropriate in the active elementary setting. When students wear this type of clothing they are often sent to the office to put a T-shirt on over it.

If you are picking up or dropping off your student and don't plan on coming into the building, please use the designated "pick up and drop off only" area in front of the building. If you need to come into the building, you can park in the visitor area of the parking lot. Under no circumstances should students be dropped off in the parking lot. If you park in the parking lot you must bring your child into the building. The elementary parking lot is one way. When leaving the building you must continue through the parking lot and exit on Clinton Street. Those attempting to back out onto Fulton Street pose a risk to our Homer students and other drivers.

Watch for notices coming home regarding the process for ordering DVDs of all of our special events in the elementary.

CLASSROOM SELECTION FOR NEXT YEAR

The parent request forms for the next school year will be available later this spring. At that time there will be a list of the teacher grade assignments for next year. We have some teachers that may be changing grade levels and as soon as we have our final list you will be notified of the process for requesting a teacher for next year. I would like to stress that the special placement form asks that the parent write a short narrative as to why this placement would be good for the child and must include personal experience with that teacher. As in the past, you will be asked to make two choices and we will try to meet your request if possible.

*Rick Cooley
Elementary Principal*

Middle School News

Helpful Homer - Staff members have recognized 103 students for being "caught" in the act of performing a kind deed so far this school year. Five students monthly receive a special treat of having lunch with Mr. Salow.

Positive Parent Contact Program - Again this year our staff has been busy making positive contacts with the families of our students. I have challenged myself and the entire staff to contact at least one family per week with good news from school.

CHAMP Club - Back for a sixth year is our Homer Middle School Parent Organization the CHAMP Club (Caring, Helpful and Motivated Parents). We have had excellent participation this year. Our goal is to provide positive (and fun) learning experiences for all of our students. We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 in Mrs. Miller's classroom (room 105). We would love to have you join us! It is a great time of fun and fellowship. Our goal is to eventually out-grow the classroom and to conduct our monthly meetings in the media center. Let's see if we can make this happen this winter/spring!

Parent Internet Viewer - Parents can help monitor their child's progress by using the Parent Internet Viewer. Go to the Homer Community Schools website which is www.homerschools.net and click on "Parent Internet Viewer" and proceed. Note: The student ID# and the pin code are the same thing.

Agendas - Again this year all of our students will be using their class agendas. Our agendas are being used to teach organizational skills as well as being used as a hall pass. Students should be bringing their completed agendas home nightly. This is a great tool for communication between home and school.

Activities - This school year our students have been able to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities including: HMS Harvestfest, middle school dances, activity nights, canned-goods collection, Toys for Tots dance, school drama production, athletics, Girl's Science and Math Conference, FFA, Spanish Club and many more!

Thank You - Thank you so much for all of the great things that you do for our kids. Your continued support of our students, staff and programs is why Homer Middle School is and will always be "A Great Place to Learn."

Middle School Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| HMS Spelling Bee | January |
| CHAMP Club Meeting | January 14 at 7 |
| Ski Trip to Timber Ridge | February |
| Read-A-Thon | February |
| School Fundraiser | February |
| Jackson Area Spelling Bee | March |
| March is Reading Month Activities | March |
| 5th Grade Class Trips | May |
| 6th Grade Campout | May |
| End of Year Dance | May 21 |
| 7th Grade Chicago Trip | June |
| 8th Grade Cedar Point Trip | June |
| 8th Grade Celebration | June 3 |

To the "Life in the Middle" School Families

It is difficult to believe that we are quickly approaching the second semester. Where have the first few months of school gone? It seems like just yesterday that our students were learning their class schedules and memorizing locker combinations.

Throughout the first semester our students have been involved in a wide assortment of activities. Whether it has been on the athletic fields, participating in the Quiz Bowl competition, raising money for the Homer Caring and Sharing, or hosting a Toys for Tots Dance, our students have conducted themselves as model citizens. I am extremely proud of each of them.

As we approach this exciting time of year there are a few everyday items that might slip our minds, so I would like to remind you of a few things that will make life a little easier for all of us.

First, it is very important that parents make certain that their student has an absence note (including date, reason for absence and parent signature) when they return to school. This would be of great assistance to our office staff. Remember: A parent/guardian phone call to the office can also serve as an absence note.

Second, as the weather begins to turn cold, please remember to dress your students warmly. Fifth and sixth grade students go outside for lunch recess and should wear a coat, hat, gloves, etc. Some middle school students choose to stand outside until the morning bell rings and they should be protected from the cold and rain. Students are always welcome to wait in the cafeteria area before school to help avoid inclement weather. To minimize the students waiting time in the morning students should remain off school property until about 7:50 a.m. They get extremely cold, however, even in just those few minutes.

Third, our Parent Internet Viewer Program on the Homer Community Schools website is up and running. I would encourage you and your child to check on the academic progress being made in school. Grade and attendance records are available 24 hours a day. We have found that students are much more diligent about work completion when they are immediately accountable at home as well as at school. There are some excellent new features that you may find useful. Happy exploring! If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to call the school for assistance.

Thank you for playing such an important part in your child's success here at Homer Middle School. Go Trojans!

*Scott Salow
Middle School Principal*

High School News - Go Trojans!

With the completion of the first semester exams, one-half of the 2009-2010 school year is behind us. This school year has been very successful to this point, and continues to move at a very fast pace. It seems like it was just the other day that we were holding Freshmen Orientation and getting ready for the first day of school.

The second semester is full of activities, highlighted by the administering of the Michigan Merit Exam (M.M.E.) for our junior class. This is the new MEAP test that all juniors in the state of Michigan will be taking. The test window for the M.M.E. will be March 9-11. Please encourage your child to get plenty of rest as they prepare for this important assessment. If you have any questions about the Michigan Merit Exam, please do not hesitate to contact the guidance or high school offices.

As we kick off the start of the second semester, I would like to recognize some outstanding achievements from the high school.

Congratulations to....

- Homer athletic teams for successful fall and winter seasons
- Homer sophomore Stacy Bangert for winning state at FFA Competition
- Homer teachers and staff for continuing to make Homer "The Destination District"

*Mr. Tom Salow
Homer High School Principal*

From the Counseling Office

Attention Senior Parents - FAFSA Forms need to be submitted by February 14 (Valentine's Day) for anyone who wishes to receive financial aid for college. If you would like to fill out your form with the help of a financial aid expert, you can attend the FAFSA workshop at KCC on February 14 at 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. This is a free event and most of our senior families go!

Seniors: Please review the scholarship listings in the *Stepping Out* book or visit the school website under the high school guidance link. There are many scholarships for seniors and deadlines for these are approaching fast! See the counseling office for applications.

*Kara Malone
Counselor*

Athletics - Go Trojans!

Another winter season is upon us and as the snow begins to build up, so does the excitement for the upcoming athletic events. Our student-athletes have put in many hours of practice and preparation to represent our school and community with an effort that will make us all proud to call ourselves Trojans.

There will be several opportunities this winter to support our student-athletes. Coach Bill O'Dell and the Girl's Varsity Basketball Team host conference rival Quincy on Friday, January 15. The grapplers led by Coach Mike Eldred will be showcased in the annual "Jason Caudill Memorial Invitational" on Saturday, January 16. Varsity Boys Basketball Coach Ed Finch and team will look to beat the Indians of Athens during the Snocoming Festivities on Friday, February 5. Our Varsity Competitive Cheer Team under the direction of Lori Hollenbaugh will compete for a league team title on Wednesday, February 17 at Jonesville High School.

Back by popular demand during basketball halftimes will be our Youth Boy's and Girl's Basketball Games, Cheerleading in Training Performances, and award winning High School Band and Drumline under the tutelage of Scott McMeeking.

Congratulations to Nicole Wurster and Johnica March who competed at the State Finals in Cross Country this fall. Nicole garnered All-State Accolades with her third place finish.

We hope that you take advantage of the many opportunities to support the Homer Trojans this winter. As always, sportsmanship...be the example.

*Drew Bordner
Athletic Director*

Homer Alternative High School

Homer Alternative High School will begin the second semester on January 25. The school has had an exciting and, at times, challenging first semester. First year teacher Mr. Steve Beck has been doing a superb job teaching math, science and social studies. The addition of Mrs. Yeider to teach English has been a real plus for the school. Back for his third season with the alternative education team is Terry McKown, who in his third year with the school is the "old pro" of the teaching staff. Mr. McKown teaches in the afternoon for two classes.

The school has a couple of students who have been working diligently to complete their studies by the end of the first semester. When the second semester gets going, another half dozen or so students will be working toward graduation this spring.

The date for graduation is set for Thursday, May 27, 2010. However, the first order of business is for the students to do well on the upcoming Michigan Merit Exam (MME) in early March.

The students at the school come from both near and far with Albion being our favorite school-of-choice location.

The alternative school continues to help Homer Community Schools to earn its title of the "Destination District."

*Bill Mullaly
Director*

HOMER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 2009-10 Calendar for Second Semester

Mon January 18	Martin Luther King Day - No School
Wed January 20	Exams
Thur January 21	Exams
Fri January 22	Exams End of 2nd Nine Weeks
Fri February 12	Mid-Winter Break - No School
Mon February 15	Professional Development Day - No School
Wed March 17	Conferences 4:00-8:00 p.m. (Student dismissal 2:00 p.m.)
Thur March 18	Conferences 4:00-8:00 p.m. (Student dismissal 2:00 p.m.)
Fri March 19	No School
Fri March 26	End of 3rd Nine Weeks
Fri April 2	Good Friday - No School
Mon April 5	Spring Vacation Begins
Mon April 12	School Resumes
Mon May 31	Memorial Day - No School
Sun June 6	Graduation Day - Ceremony at 2:00 p.m.
Wed June 9	Exams
Wed June 10	Exams
Fri June 11	End of 4th Nine Weeks - Out at 11 a.m. (Last day of school)

* Instructional day starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.
* Bold items reflect the Calhoun County Common Calendar