

**Taxes!**

**What can you do to ensure your tax dollars are being well spent.**



**NCHS BOYS WIN PURPLE AND GOLD TOURNEY**



**COLLEGE ALGEBRA CLASS HOSTS 2ND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST**



**3RD GRADE EXPLORES THE USA THROUGH SKYPE SESSIONS**

# EAGLE PROFILE



Devin Brown shares info about the Tiny House with Hutch News reporters while Carpentry Class gives tour.

## Ness City High School Students Progress Toward Completion of Tiny House

From a pile of metal and wood, a Tiny House has arisen just outside the back door of the Ness City High School Woodshop in tiny Ness City, Kansas. Two classes of carpentry students were challenged to come up with an idea that would provide them with the experience they needed to learn all aspects of building a home, and produce a product that was marketable in a struggling economy. The students decided to look at this challenge in a new way. Instead of simply looking at it as a typical woodshop challenge, they looked at it as a business challenge in a global economy. While the housing market may be struggling in Ness County, it isn't struggling everywhere. So how do we build a home that could be marketed to someone outside of our geographical area or from another State? Research and discussions led to the Tiny House Project.

The exciting thing about this project is that our students will receive the experience of building all aspects of a home, and learn about the global economy in which they live and work. This process has led to students reaching out over social media to different individuals and organizations that are involved in the Tiny House Movement. It has opened their world up to how things work outside of the tiny community in which they live. They have learned much more than the typical carpentry skills taught in a typical classroom.

When complete, the Tiny House will be 330 square feet. There will be two sleeping lofts, providing sleeping place for 1 Queen bed and 1 Full bed. The house will have a complete kitchen, bathroom, washer and dryer, and



Devin Brown and Logan Schlegel take State Board of Education Member Sally Cauble and her husband on a tour of the Tiny House. Mrs. Cauble was very impressed with the many great things happening in USD 303!

all the amenities of a typical home, just on a smaller scale. The home will be certified by Pacific West Tiny Homes, making it a certified Tiny Home RV. The home will be sold by private treaty, and the classes are developing plans to market the home across the United States. Since it is a THOW (Tiny House On Wheels), the home can easily be delivered and set up anywhere a truck can pull it. Comparable homes produced by manufacturing companies sell for \$72,000. The class plans to list the home for \$59,900 with profits going to purchase new equipment such as a CNC router for their program. The classes welcome any questions and inquires about the Tiny House, and would be willing to accept an offer before completion allowing the purchaser to customize some of the finishes. The classes plan to have their Tiny House complete by April 1, 2017, just in time for someone to get a home set up for the Spring and Summer Seasons.



Carpentry class taking Hutch News reporters on guided tour of Tiny House.

### College Algebra Class Puts Together 2nd Annual 7-12 Christmas Breakfast

This year was our second annual all school Christmas Breakfast. The purpose of this event is to bring our school together, show some love, celebrate the holidays, and to spread Christmas spirit. As a class we are looking forward to starting this as a tradition for our school and maybe even more in the future. We are interested in making this into a bigger event, making it something that students can look forward to each year. As a way to get the students involved we ask them to bring supplies for the breakfast, such as eggs, syrup, butter, milk, juice, etc. A good-sized group of students volunteered to cook the breakfast that morning. Waking up was the hard part given the fact that we began cooking at 5:30am. Then to get the teachers involved we ask them to help serve the breakfast. We learned from last year's mistakes and improved the breakfast overall by keeping records from last year that were used to be cost efficient. We would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Reinhardt, USD 303, and the entire kitchen staff. We would also like to give a big thank you to the teachers, faculty and students that helped us to make the breakfast a success. Lastly, the college algebra class would like to thank Mr. Allen for helping in the preparation of this event for the past two years. From the college algebra class to you, we hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### Preschoolers Learn About Careers



Preschool has been working on so many fun and exciting things this year! We are learning a letter a week. Along with that we are learning careers that starts with that letter. If the weather has been nice we have walked to several places like the construction site, police station, health department, Golden Belt Telephone, First State Bank, and The Credit Union. We were supposed to go to the eye care clinic, but it was too cold, so the optometrist came to us instead! We have also had many visitors like nurses, mailman, the art teacher, and the construction teacher. Thank you all for sharing your careers. If anyone else has a career they would like to share please feel free to let me know.

### Junior High Volleyball

As I stepped onto the court as a first year coach, I was not sure what to expect on my first day of practice, but even after just one day of practice I knew that I would be coaching a great group of junior high girls. With limited numbers after the first couple weeks of practice we made the decision to bring up the sixth grade girls who were interested in playing. At the beginning of the season we had all the girls create individual goals and team goals for the season. Some of the girls' team goals were to work as a team, respect each other, talk on the court, and bond. Coach Cramer and I also created our own individual and team goals. One of the goals that both of us had for our team was that the girls come to practice with a good attitude and work to get better everyday. Though this season has had its ups and downs the improvement that Coach Cramer and I have seen this season is far more than what we could ask for. As a young team there was inexperience but Coach Cramer and I have seen improvement by all. We are lucky to be given this opportunity to work with this group of girls and can't wait to see how this season unfolds.

### NCES PE Completes Jump Rope for Heart

Just before Christmas break, the elementary students finished up our Jump Rope for Heart unit. Rebecca and I are in the process of counting the money and figuring up who all of the winners are for the various contests. As always, whoever raises at least \$50 receives a t-shirt (plus other prizes) and gets to throw a chocolate pie at Mr. Younger's pretty face! In the hallway outside the gym is a poster of everyone who has raised at least \$1. Just by looking at the poster Jump Rope for Heart was a huge success this year. The kids are anxiously waiting for the results as I challenged them to reach a school goal of at least \$3,500 and which ever class raises the most money will get an extra 30 minutes of PE. As we wrap up the unit the kids are know freshening up on their basketball skills!

Over at the high school, it's time for the greatest PE game in the world, Badminton!

### NCJHS Girls Basketball Nears End of Season

Our season started off pretty rough. We lost our first four games before getting a couple wins under our belts. Each and everyday we see some sort of improvement and that is exactly what we want to see. We have learned from each game and the girls try their best to make themselves better. Coach Seib and I tell our girls to use each game as a learning experience and to make the bad games push you even harder for the next.

On Saturday, January 7th, the JV tournament begins and is being hosted in LaCrosse. The JV girls are seeded No. 1 in the tournament!! We are so proud of the girls as they have worked very hard and deserve this spot. The A Team CPL tournament is scheduled to start January 27th in Victoria. We are hoping to capture some more wins to grab a decent seed in the CPL tournament.

We appreciate all of the support that has been shown towards our team!! Coach Seib and I are very excited to see what the rest of the season holds for us.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Practices FAIL (First, Attempt In Learning)

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade class worked on different PBL and STEM based projects throughout the first semester in order to engage themselves in their own learning. They worked with 6<sup>th</sup> grade on a "Shark Tank," project where groups



Logan Schlegel prepares pancakes on Coach Starr's griddle while Christian, Brennan, and others watch. Thanks Coach Starr for letting us use the griddle!



Jocelyn, Kenzee, Jaylee, and Cicely prepare condiments for the eggs and pancakes while Mr. Allen provides comedic relief!



created new products that were to be critiqued by a panel of judges. During this process the students needed to use different real world skills such as figuring up the cost of their products and how much it would be to make and improve them. Another project that the students worked on this semester was to recreate the Mayflower, with Miss. Heim's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class. Each group had a \$20 budget when recreating the Mayflower to hold 100 passengers (100 pennies). Students enjoyed working and helping guide the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students through this learning process. Before Christmas break, students researched different countries for Christmas around the world. When completing their research, students used supplies in the classroom to create different objects that resembled the country they researched. We can't wait to see what 2017 brings in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade!



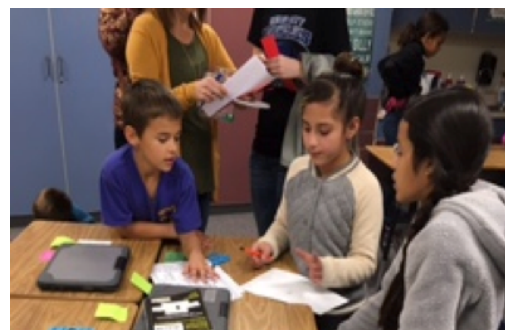
5th Grade students worked on different ways to create catapult devices to solve an essential question posed to the class.



Evan, Daniel, and Raul present their invention to the Shark Tank!



Tiana, Kiera, Alexis, and Jaiden use their Chromebook to research possible ideas and solutions for a new invention.



Emily and Diana work with Taylor to develop a plan to solve a problem.

### NCHS Boys Kick Off 16/17 Season

The boys basketball team is off to a relatively good start. As of now, both the varsity and junior varsity are 7-0 and the varsity is ranked second in class 2A. The varsity also won the 2016 Purple and Gold Tournament, for the second consecutive year. As the season continues to progress, the schedule will keep getting more difficult. We will face a number of ranked teams, and play in an extremely tough mid-season tournament at St. John. Players and coaches approach each night knowing we will have to bring our best effort in order to get better.

This year's team is one of the largest we have had in my time as head coach at NCHS. We have 29 players out, consisting of 10 freshman, 11 sophomores, 5 juniors, and 3 seniors. With this many guys out, practice remains extremely competitive because they understand they are competing daily for playing time, whether it be at the junior varsity or varsity level.

I also have two new assistant coaches this year: Garrett Flax and a volunteer coach, Marc Cowles. Garrett, who played for me in high school and was a member of the 2012-13 team that placed 4<sup>th</sup> in state, has been a huge asset so far this year. He has a great understanding of our team philosophies and expectations. Marc has also been a great addition to the team so far this year. At Weskan, he was the head girls basketball coach, so he offers a wealth of knowledge, as well new ideas and drills. As a staff, we are excited to see what the season holds for this competitive group of student-athletes.



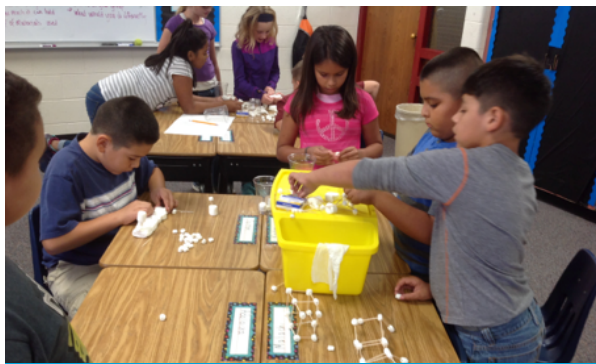
Members of the NCHS Boys Basketball Team hoist the Purple and Gold Trophy after the dominating win over Oakley in the Championship Game!

## A Look Into the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade!

Where to even start? There are 19 awesome kids that I have the privilege to teach every week! In just a short semester we have done several PBLs (project base learning), explored things in and out of the classroom, and of course had tons of fun along the way. At the beginning of the year I asked the kids, “if you knew you could not fail, what would you attempt to do?” I wanted to set the tone for the year that it was going to be okay if they failed, and that it is not a bad thing to fail at something. With that being said, they also had to realize that if they failed at something they were to not give up but to go back and evaluate what they could do to make it better, or to make it be successful. This group of kids is a blast to be around and I could not have asked for a better class for my first year.



4th Graders work together to put together a group assignment.



Miguel, Karmen, Luis, and Cruz learn about engineering by building with marshmallows and toothpicks!



How high can you stack cups? Savannah, Justin, Miguel, and Karina found out with persistence, you can stack them taller than a 4th grader!



Jorge, Gretchen, Angela, and Justin work with materials to create new substances.

## Mr. Allen’s Integrated Algebra 2 class

Integrated Algebra 2 has been very busy with a project that was presented to them. This class is working on a crane for the preschool and kindergarten classes at Ness City Elementary School. This crane will have a foot pedal that will turn the crane in a circle and a hand pedal that will be able to pick things up with a hook. They started by measuring different lengths of arms and legs of students in the current preschool classes. After gathering these measurements, they made a rough sketch on the board, learned how much it will approximately cost, and is now making a 3D drawing of what it will look like. Once that is done, they will start making the crane with the help of Mr. Kerr’s class. We are hoping this project will last many years for the young students at Ness City Elementary School.

## NCHS JH Boys Basketball

The Ness City Junior High basketball team is working hard this season. The junior high Eagles basketball team has 23 players out this year. We have seen the students improve every week in all aspects of the game. The junior varsity team has a 4-3 record while the varsity team has a 3-4 record on the season.

Case Beckman and I have enjoyed coaching the players this year because of how hard they work everyday. The 8th graders have done a great job of leading this team in the right direction. We have worked on always staying positive towards each other and remembering it is never about one player, but the team. The 8th graders this year are: Seth Flax, Patrick O’Toole, Edwin Reyes, Dylan Bruntz, Tristan Schwien, Matthew Delaney, Brendon Reed, Gustavo Gomez, Ethan Schlegel, Jose Lopez, and Braeden Miller.



The season has not gone as well as planned. We are hoping we are now healthy and ready to finish the season strong. I want to thank all of the parents for the support throughout the year.

## English 7, 9, 11

All of the “odd” English classes spent the past semester on reading, writing, grammar, literary devices, and classroom novels. Seventh grade English completed a mix of silly and informational projects this past semester. The silly parts included poems with illustrations and over-exaggerated Star Wars themed bios. The informational parts included researching space exploration and Mars in order to create a travel brochure for their self-designed Martian colony. The freshmen English I classes focused on short stories and writings. They continue to improve on reading and utilizing informational texts. English III went over a series of early American literature ranging from pre-colonial through the 19th century. We linked transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau’s Civil Disobedience to Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and current protests.

## THE WILD WEST WAS FUN

The Wild West was fun when 29 students from Ness City High School presented the two-act play “Buckshot and Blossoms” Friday, Nov. 11. Six weeks of arduous practices prepared the actors, actresses, and sound/light technicians to perform two presentations.

The play was a rip-roaring spoof of the Old West! Down at the Trail Dust Hotel, the villainous Whip of the Whip Lash Gang was concocting nasty schemes to rob citizens while his partner-in-crime, Pearl of Pecos, dealt marked cards. But thankfully the town hired a new sheriff, Johnny Wright, also known as “The Fastest Gun in the West.” The lovely Annabelle Rawlins, owner of the mine that Whip was trying to claim as his own, turned up with her campaign against guns inside town limits. She favored blossoms over bullets. The audiences from the matinee and the evening performance were rolling with laughter as The Durango Kid (the meanest gunslinger alive) and the Sheriff played High Noon in the hotel lobby... without a single shot being fired!



*Cactus Kate*-Kyla Stephen, *Mrs. Juniper*--Taylor Murray, *Letty*-Kerri Bruntz, *Miss Gray*-Angelena Copeland, *Gabby Ways*-Landon Reinhardt, *Alibi*- Trevor VanDegrift, *Hopalot*-John Pfannenstiel, *Whip Lash*-Robert Wierman, *Pearl of the Pecos*-Jaymi Stewart, *Saddleblanket Rawlins*-Kaydan Smith, *Sally* -Savannah Moore, *Minerva* -Jocelyn Walker, *Mrs. Norton* -Jaiden Pavlu, *Mayor Norton*-Clay Beutler, *Johnny Wright* -Trace Flax, *Andy Allen*-Kris Liggett, *Widder Jones*-Miriam Guzman, *Henrietta Geysler*-Alysson Foos, *Dolly Roger*-Baylee Holecek, *Annabelle Rawlins*-Cicely Moody, *Judy Ford*-Makenzie Flax, *Nellie Rectangle*-Jaycie Richardson, *The Durango Kid*-Angel Guzman *Citizens*-Virginia Schaben, Tiana Epperson, Jenna Werth, Summer Pfannenstiel, *Lights* -Dylan McGovern, Sound-C.J. Porter. *Director*-Elaine Wierman, *Assistant Director*-Carrie Beutler.

### 3rd Grade Participates in Mystery Skype Sessions

Students in Mrs. Buethe’s third grade class are learning about Geography through mystery skypes. During a mystery skype, students connect with another class and ask geography questions to narrow down which state the other class is from. The questions must be “yes/no” questions, and each class tries to see who can guess their state first. We’ve connected with classes in North Carolina, Kansas, Alabama, Ohio, and Minnesota recently. After both classes have correctly guessed, we share a bit about our town and state.



### KAY Club Begins Another Busy Year

The Ness City High School KAY Club (Kansas Association for Youth) started off the 2016 school year with an ice cream sandwich membership drive. Fifty-two students in grades 9-12 signed up to be members, making this one of the largest KAY Clubs here in recent years. The largest undertaking of the club will be to continue the recycling program in the high school building. Recycling containers have been placed in all of the classrooms, the library, and the teacher’s workroom. Throughout the year, the KAY members collect the recycling from each classroom and take it down to the recycling center.

Officers for the 2016-17 school year include Jaycie Richardson – President, Alexis Clarke – Vice President, Wyatt Delaney – Secretary, Robert Wierman – Treasurer, Kerri Bruntz – Point Director, Tiana Epperson – Director of School Services, Angel Guzman – Director of Community Services, Taylor Murray – Publicity, and John Pfannenstiel – Student Council Representative.

On November 3, 2016, five officers attended the Area 5 KAY Regional Conference at Cimarron. The Club received the Red Award, recognizing their student leadership and service to their school, and community for the 2015-16 school year. The theme for the 2016 Regional Conference was “Lights, Camera, Action”! This conference affords opportunities for student leaders and sponsors from neighboring clubs to share successes and challenges, as well as exchange ideas. Sessions in leadership training and organizational skills are also offered. These conferences inspire delegates to return to their clubs to challenge their local members.

The Kansas Association for Youth is a character building, leadership training program directed by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. This nationally acclaimed organization provides students an opportunity to learn to assume their citizenship responsibilities and to enrich their personalities through well-organized programs.



The five officers attending the KAY Regional Conference in Cimarron. Taylor Murray, Kerri Bruntz, Alexis Clarke, Jaycie Richardson, and Angel Guzman.

### 1st Graders Explore Story Structure and Engineering Concepts

Throughout the month of December the first graders were having fun learning about story structure and reading by using the various gingerbread men stories. As a class we compared several different gingerbread books and found what makes each story unique. After reading and discussing the different endings the kids decided to help the gingerbread man get across the river without getting eaten by creating a bridge. The students worked together in teams on their bridges and each group had some amazing ideas. During this process the students used problem

solving skills, communication, and critical thinking. They learned how to collaborate with each other and share their ideas effectively. Some other gingerbread fun that the students participated in was, gingerbread houses, gingerbread cookies, and a gingerbread hunt.



Dominick, MaKaylah, and Wyatt work on their bridge design.



Zaylee, Trevor, and Giovanni discuss ideas for their bridge design.



Evelyn and Brandon work on their bridge design while MaKaylah offers support.

### Random thoughts from Mr. Flax

I hope everyone enjoyed a nice Christmas vacation and a Happy New Year! With the holiday season coming to a close, that only means another semester is in the books! Grade cards have been printed and mailed out and the honor roll has been calculated and released (A very impressive listing of students).

For many years, the spring semester has always been the time for the annual Kansas State Assessments. Most of our current students have grown up in what was known as the “No Child Left Behind” era. We as educators stressed the importance of these assessments, and it became the driving force for most of our instruction in the spring semester. They were truly high stakes tests that greatly determined whether each school met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). We still take State Assessments every spring, and they are still important but the “High Stakes” of the assessments to each individual school has dwindled. This has enabled our focus here at Ness City Jr/Sr High to shift from “making AYP” to helping each student work to become more college and/or career ready. New this year, results from the State Assessments will also include ACT score projections to 10th graders. Data that I feel will finally give some true value to the students and their families. Below I tried to highlight a few common questions about assessments, the ACT, and what it means to being college and career ready:

- What determines whether a student is college ready? The ACT has long been used as the college entrance exam in Kansas colleges and universities. The ACT is offered six times a year and generally, students take it between the end of a their junior year into their senior year. Not all students take the ACT, but many take it multiple times, striving to gain their highest possible score.
- What value is in a high ACT score? Many colleges base the amount of scholarship money awarded to their incoming freshman based solely on the results of the ACT, making the ACT potentially worth money to a student.
- Should my child take the ACT? This is a question that is not easily answered, but if your student has post secondary goals that include a four year college or university, then they need to take it. Many colleges or universities require a minimum score to be accepted. Now having the ACT score projections from the state assessments should help to guide parents and their students on determining if they should take the ACT.
- Does my child need to take the ACT to go to a technical or junior college? No, most do not require a ACT score, but if an ACT is not taken, they will most likely take some sort of a placement test once enrolled.



Although the focus of state assessments has changed somewhat, the information provided by offering score projections may help you and your student make more informed decisions about their postsecondary goals. The Topeka Capital Journal published an article on December 26, 2016 that may offer further explanation. You can find it online using the following link:

<http://cjonline.com/news/local/2016-12-26/kansas-students-receive-act-score-projections-state-test-results>

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding your child and their postsecondary goals. I'd be more than happy to talk with you to try and answer your questions.

## Taxes!

It is always a tense time when our annual tax statements come out. I can't imagine that there is anyone in Ness County that has seen a reduction in their property taxes in the last several years, and if your statement is anything like mine, you have seen a sizable increase. As one of the taxing entities in the County, I believe that it is important that we do the best and most with the funds that are made available to us. I also feel it is important for all tax payers to understand how the school's budget is built, how tax levies are developed, and the things we have done as a district to attempt to reduce costs and put money into our classrooms.

First, taxes are a complicated matter, and the more that I talk to people the more I find that we don't always understand what goes into figuring our taxes. As a school district, we levy a MILL rate to fund three different operating funds for the district.

The State of Kansas levies 20 MILLS on all property across the State. This is a MILL levy we do not have any control over at the local level. These 20 MILLS are used to fund what is called our General Fund. Currently, the 20 MILL State Levy does not fully fund our General Fund account, so the State uses property, sales, and income taxes from other counties to fund this account.

The district's next levy is used to fund our Supplemental General or Local Option Budget (LOB) fund. As a district, we have the taxing authority to levy MILLS equal to 30% of our General Fund Budget. This gets a little confusing because the number used to calculate the General Fund Budget number to figure LOB maximum authority is actually based on a Base State Aide from several years ago. When the State began cutting Base State Aide, they allowed districts to continue to use the higher number to figure LOB authority. As I said, one of the many confusing parts of our school budget. Because our LOB max authority is based on a budget number and not a max MILL levy, this levy changes every year and is determined by assessed valuation of the geographical boundaries of the District. For us, this creates a challenge due to the ever changing value of oil. Two years ago our assessed value was over \$61,000,000. This means each MILL brought in \$61,000. This year our assessed value is around \$37,000,000 which means each MILL brings in \$37,000. This would require us to almost double our MILL levy for LOB to get the same amount of budget authority. I understand the impact this would have on our local economy and developed a budget for the board to approve that resulted in about a \$180,000 budget reduction for the district. This allowed us to increase our LOB MILL levy by 2.5 MILLS versus almost the 10 MILLS needed to maintain our budget. We are using savings and carry over funds to fill the holes for now, but as we all know this will only take us so far.

The third MILL levy is for Capital Improvements. We have the authority to levy up to 8 MILLS to fund this account. These funds are used to ensure our physical plant and the things involved in taking care of the physical plant are funded. What we are able to pay for with this money has changed over the years, and most recently these funds have become more flexible.

**How do we compare to other districts: (MILL Levy rates are from 15/16) (16/17 rates were not available at time of publication)(MILL Levy rates do not include Recreation Commission MILL Levies)**

	State Levy	LOB	Capital	Total	Bond	Grand Total
Ness City 16/17	20	15.088	8.00	43.088	0	43.088
Ness City 15/16	20	12.693	7.891	40.584	0	40.584
Western Plains 15/16	20	15.216	5.973	41.189	0	41.189
Dighton 15/16	20	11.513	5.56	37.073	26.953	64.026
Hodgeman County 15/16	20	16.282	7.998	44.28	12.25	56.53
Trego County 15/16	20	18.566	7.893	46.459	5.533	51.992
LaCrosse 15/16	20	23.434	4.501	47.935	0	47.935
Central Plains 15/16	20	13.374	5.996	39.37	6.131	45.501
Kinsley 15/16	20	25.983	7.998	53.981	13.896	67.877
St. John 15/16	20	23.548	7.993	51.541	0	51.541
Macksville 15/16	20	15.386	3.998	39.384		39.384
Ellinwood 15/16	20	26.104	6.008	52.112	13.581	65.693
Otis-Bison 15/16	20	26.363	3.501	49.864		49.864
Victoria 15/16	20	21.581	8	49.581	11.924	61.505
State Wide Average 15/16	20	18.985	5.837	44.822	6.822	51.644
Area Average 15/16	20	16.284	6.636	42.92	7.456	50.376
League Schools Average 15/16	20	20.941	6.210	47.150	5.059	52.209

**Budget:**

Comparing MILL Levies from Last Year (this years data for other districts is not yet available)

We are well below the State Wide Average, League Average, and Area Schools Average.

No one wants to raise taxes but we also want to be able to offer all we can.

This is information that helps put things in perspective.

We budgetted \$180,795 in LOB less this year then we did in 15/16. It would have required an additional 4.54 MILLS to make up this difference.

In 15/16, we had revenues of \$3,837,712. This year, our revenues will be \$3,595,879 for 16/17. This is a revenue cut of \$241,833.

In 15/16, we budgetted \$4,669,574 and spent \$3,816,269. For 16/17, we budgetted \$4,578,008. This is a budget cut of \$91,566, with a projected increased enrollment of 19 students. This is a projected enrollment increase of 6% and a budget cut of 2%.

Another area that requires some discussion is what causes our tax levy to increase. Taxes are figured by taking the value of your property times the MILL levy. If the value of your property increases, your taxes increase. If the MILL levy increases your taxes increase. A MILL is equal to \$1 of taxes for each \$1000 of assessed value. In simple terms, your home is assessed at 11.5% of the appraised value. So, if your home is appraised for \$100,000, meaning you could sell it for that amount, your assessed value is \$11,500. For each MILL levied, you pay \$11.50. For this school year, the 43.112 MILLS levied by the school district on this home would be \$496. The Recreation Commission levies an additional 2.403 MILLS that run through the school which increase the tax bill \$28 for a total of \$524 in taxes for the school district. The City, Township, County, Hospital, and other taxing authorities levy additional MILLS to fund their budgets. The MILL levy for the school district increased 2.754 MILLS for this year. 2.504 additional MILLS were levied by the District and additional portion of a MILL was

levied by the Recreation Commission. This increase in MILLS by the District equates to a tax increase on this home of \$32 over last year. As stated, an increase in MILL rate equals an increase in taxes.

The other reason taxes increased is due to the increase in the value of your property. I believe that our local farmers, ranchers, and business owners have felt the biggest hit in terms of property value. It is my understanding that agriculture property value is based on a 10 year average. The last couple of years have seen a huge increase in what land prices are bringing. When land in the county sells for a lot of money, the value of your land increases. The value of your land increases, your taxes increase. Most years and in most areas this value increase is off set by a MILL reduction or stabilization. Unfortunately, due to our loss of assessed valuation locally, taxing authorities are having to increase their MILL levy to off set budget loss. This creates a double whammy for our patrons.

So what have we and what can we do to ensure our tax dollars are being used effectively. Over the last two years, we have worked as a school district to reduce our operating costs. We have installed more efficient lighting, gas, HVAC, and other utility type equipment. This has resulted in savings of close to \$20,000 in annual expenses. These upgrades have also allowed us to reduce the huge costs involved in keeping old and outdated systems running. We have reduced staff in our food service and custodial departments, and become better and more efficient at purchasing supplies for these departments. Combining these savings with our utility savings, we have saved around \$60,000 over the last two years. As we all know, things are not getting cheaper, and most of these savings have gone to offset higher costs in other areas such as health care. Over the next couple of years, we will need to make some decisions as a district and community. I believe we have become very efficient in our daily operations leaving very little room left for possible savings. We have the budget authority to continue everything we have been doing to improve our school district, but to do so will require additional MILL levy increases or an increase in assessed value over the next couple of years. We are at a point where cuts will affect programs our students learn from and enjoy. These are not easy decisions to make, and we would like to ask for input from our patrons on this matter. Simply saying my taxes are too high won't help. We encourage input on what exactly we could stop doing, stop offering, or are there ways we could be more efficient that we haven't found yet. Or, are we happy with what we are doing, and if we have to pay for it, we have to pay for it. Neither are easy decisions to come to, and will require ideas from everyone to accomplish.

Derek Reinhardt, Superintendent

**NESS CITY HIGH SCHOOL  
HONOR ROLL  
2016/2017  
Semester 1**

**NESS CITY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
HONOR ROLL  
2016/2017  
Semester 1**

**PRINCIPAL'S**  
Beutler, Clayton  
Cardenas, Abby  
Clarke, Alexis  
Copeland, Angelena  
Delaney, Wyatt  
Epperson, Tiana  
Foos, Alysson  
Freel, Trey  
Gomez, Luis  
Kiltzke, Kristen  
Luna, Mario  
Mesta, Iran  
Murray, Taylor  
Pfannenstiel, John  
Reinhardt, Landon  
Richardson, Jaycie  
Seery, Madison  
Stephen, Kyle  
Wierman, Robert

**SUPERIOR**  
Armon, Levi  
Araiza-Berjarano, Sebastian  
Beauchamp, Sydney  
Bruntz, Kerri  
Cardenas, Jennifer  
Cupp, Chance  
Cupp, Makenzee  
Dawes, Emily  
Flax, Makenzie  
Flax, Trace  
Foos, Ashley  
Guzman, Angel  
Guzman, Milton  
Hamilton, Sierra  
Holeccek, Baylee  
McClure, Darian  
Moody, Cicely  
Moore, Savannah  
Pavlu, Jaiden  
Rupp, Cole  
Schaben, Virginia  
Scheopner, Christian  
Seib, Easton  
Walker, Jocelyn  
Wallgren, Reese

**HONOR**  
Briney, Jacklyn  
Byrd, Jake  
Childers, Levi  
Fehrenbach, Dylan  
Gabel, Madison  
Gomez, Suzanna  
Hahn, Matthew  
Jurado, Paola  
Liggett, Kris  
Pfannenstiel, Summer  
Rios, Andres  
Schlegel, Logan  
Slagle, Westin  
Smith, Kaydan  
Starr, Rylee  
Stewart, Joe  
Stoecklein, Kade  
Vogel, Brayden

**PRINCIPAL'S**  
Schwien, Tristan

**SUPERIOR**  
Bailey, Sapphira  
Bruntz, Dylan  
Cable, Taylor  
Copeland, Jadon  
Cox, Kinzi  
Fellhoelter, Kyler  
Foos, Amy  
Horton, Caidyn  
Luna, Eladio  
Moore, John  
Pavlu, Alex  
Reinhardt, Alexa  
Schreiber, Gavin  
Smees, Caitlin  
Starr, Taylor  
Stoecklein, Dawson  
Walter, Dallin

**HONOR**  
Backstrom, Kaleigh  
Delaney, Matthew  
Flax, Seth  
Lopez, Jose  
Marshall, Casen  
Morales, Andrea  
Pavlu, Audrey  
Reyes, Edwin  
Schlegel, Ethan  
Seib, Jackson