

Lyons Schools Have Had a Big Year

2016 was a year full of big events and significant changes for USD 405.

As the state of Kansas has changed its emphasis in public education to focus more on college and career readiness, USD 405 has made some changes too. The Board of Education established new goals in the district's Strategic Plan. New vision and mission statements were approved. A new emphasis on STEM and career and technical education goes clear down into the lower elementary.

The high school started a class in robotics with the middle school to follow. The high school team has been competing in robotics competitions. The high school had its first Individual Plans of Study student-led parent conferences in the spring. The high school also added a new career and technical education pathway in fire science.

One obvious physical change was the addition of a new double-sided, high-resolution, full-color, LED marquee on the campus of Lyons High School / Lyons Middle School. Another much needed and much appreciated physical change was the replacement of the 50 year old cumbersome wooden bleachers at the high school gym with sturdier, lighter, and much more attractive plastic seating.

The Board of Education spent much of the year determining what to do with excess bond funds of nearly a half million dollars by studying the needs of the district and working through the committee process to respond to those needs.

The last major project from the 2013 bond issue was the renovation of the Central Elementary School cafeteria. The cafeteria was transformed from a makeshift kitchen and seating area in an industrial arts building to a modern and aesthetic cafeteria. The portion of Central that is referred to as the sixth grade wing along with the old middle school gym received a new heating system as well.

It was also a year of impressive awards. Lyons High School received the Bronze Award in the US News and World Report Best High Schools in America as well as a special recognition by the ACT organization for significant achievement despite demographic factors that usually have negative impact on ACT scores. The Air Force Junior ROTC wing received two significant national awards during 2016, one for general excellence and one for community service.

Lyons High School played host to three large sports activities in the spring of 2016, showing off some of our new facilities. Those events were the Central Kansas League high school track and field, Regional track and Regional softball.

All faculty, staff and students participated in the second-annual community improvement day called Lions in Lyons, accomplishing nearly 3000 hours of improvement projects.

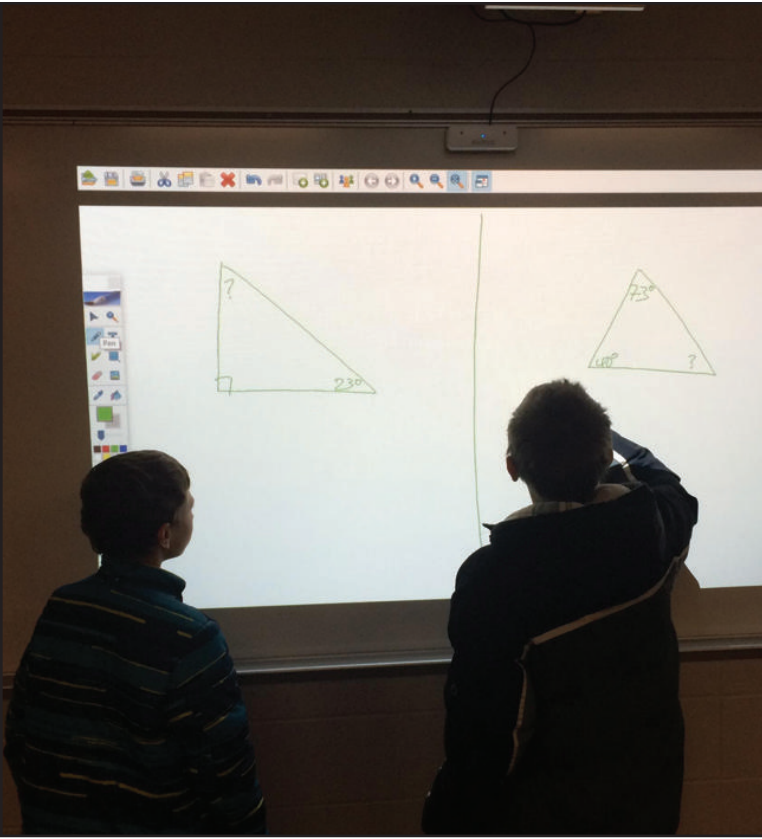
2017 is picking up literally and figuratively right where 2016 ended.

The Kansas State High School Activities Association State Debate Tournaments for 4A four-speaker, 4A two-speaker, 3-2-1A four-speaker and 3-2-1A two-speaker debate with over 250 of the state's best high school debaters, were hosted on January 20 and 21 by Lyons High School.

In a couple of weeks, Lyons will play host to 450 teachers from 11 area school districts who will be here for an in-service presented by world-renowned researcher, author and speaker Dr. Marcia Tate.

A couple of weeks after that Lyons High School will host Sub-State basketball.

USD 405 is a great place to go to school and a great place to work. It is awesome to be able to show off our students, staff and facilities to others as they attend these large scale events.



The Mimeo projection system used at Lyons Middle School is state of the art interactive classroom technology.

Career and Academic Planning

The vision for education in the state of Kansas by the Kansas Department of Education is, “Kansas leads the world in the success of each student”. Another goal is to have each high school student college or career ready by the time they graduate from high school. To help accomplish these goals, Lyons High School implemented, “Individual Plans of Study” (IPS) for students in grades 9-12 during the 2015-16 school year. The purpose is so that each student has either an Individual Plan of Study or an Individual Education Plan. To help better prepare each student for their future, the IPS includes many parts. A four/five year plan of study to cover each year of high school plus their first year of post-secondary plans. This year, Lyons High School students began using Career Cruising to help them identify future careers by completing an interest inventory which required them to answer a battery of questions. According to how students answered the questions, potential careers were identified for the student. These results can then help determine which classes a student should be taking during their time at Lyons High School to prepare them for their future career(s). The four-year plan provides a road map of classes

that a student should take and complete while in high school to better prepare them for their first year at a trade/technical school, a two-year college or a four-year college/university depending on the amount of education required for their future career. Plans started out very basic last year and will be improved each year as the students work towards graduation.

To share this information, students will lead a conference with their parents and teachers being team members. The “IPS” will be reviewed, with options of adding to and making changes to benefit the student goals. This conference will also serve as a pre-enrollment conference to cover which classes the student plans to take for the 2017-18 school year. Students will also share their e-Portfolio (electronic portfolio) which should include their resume, honors and awards earned by the student, a list of community service performed by the student, job applications, and a self-rating set of employability skills. These individual student-led conferences will be held on March 13 & 14 from 4:45 to 8 p.m. in the teachers’ rooms at Lyons High School. Conference times will be arranged through the student to accommodate parents’ availability.

Mission of Park Elementary is to provide building blocks for learning

At Park Elementary, our mission is to provide the building blocks for learning in a nurturing, child-centered environment. As a pre-kindergarten through second grade building we try to give our children not only the educational experiences that will enable them to succeed in life, but to also give the opportunity to experience things they might not normally be able to. 2016 was another year of providing those building blocks and experiences. It was a year of fun, hard work and learning.

Educationally, the teachers and staff strive for excellence every day. Their intent is to give each child the best education. To do this, they are continually searching for programs, strategies and methods to improve their instruction. One of the new programs they have implemented is called CHAMPS. CHAMPS is a school wide behavior management system that gives teachers and students the ability to communicate effectively in the classroom outlining student expectations and learning outcomes. It has had a good effect on the building as a whole and has made it more efficient in how it operates. Another program that Park utilizes to ensure

student success is Reading Recovery. This program is for first graders who are struggling with reading. Students who participate receive intensive reading instruction one-on-one with a reading specialist thirty minutes a day for eighteen to twenty weeks. The program is exceptionally successful because eighty-five percent of students who finish the program are at or above grade level. This is significant because the national average is only seventy-five percent.

Park teachers and staff are always looking for opportunities for children to have fun. The school has random fun days or moments where students and staff can play games, have a dance party, take part in special themed days and the traditional field trip. Some of those include trips to Exploration Place in Wichita, the Kansas Wetlands Educational Center at Cheyenne Bottoms and to P&M Pumpkin Ranch in Moundridge. They also provide other recreational experiences like watching a Sterling College Women’s Basketball Game, Bowling at Sterling or Skating at Skateland in Hutchinson.

2016 was an exceptional year for teacher and student

recognition. Three Park teachers were recognized at the state level and one at the national. Shannon Hendricks was the elementary nominee for USD 405 for the Kansas Department of Education’s Teacher of the Year for 2017. Also recognized was Morgan Walton for her nomination for the Kansas Department of Education’s Horizon Award for exceptional first year teachers. Lastly, Delores Orth was recognized for her exceptional teaching in the Reading Recovery program. Her work was selected and presented at the National Reading Recovery Convention. It can be said that all of the teachers at Park Elementary do an exceptional job. Students also shared in the spotlight through the monthly student recognition program for character education. The Star Student program rewards student for their friendship, character and citizenship skills.

Overall, it was a great year to be a Lion Cub. Students thrived, teachers grew and most importantly, building blocks were laid for the future growth and well-being of students in a nurturing and child-centered environment.

Reflections from Lyons Middle School

In January of 1996, I was midway through my 8th grade year at Lyons Middle School. Fast forward 21 years, I am now halfway through my first year at LMS as the building’s principal. Had you told the 13 year old Derek Carlson that he would one day return to Lyons to be an administrator in this district, he would not have believed you. He may have thought you were a little crazy. However, here I am. I am sitting in the principal’s office and not because I made a poor choice in one of my classes. I’m sitting in this office right now because this is where I want to be. As I neared the completion of my schoolwork to become a building principal, I knew that I wanted to work in a school like Lyons. I wanted to have the opportunity to raise my children in a community like Lyons. The fact that I get to once again call Lyons my home again means a lot to me and I feel fortunate that my boys will get to experience all of the great things that this community and

school district has to offer.

I decided to take a look at Lyons Middle School then and compare it to what it has evolved into today. The most obvious change has happened in the past couple school years with the completion of the new building. The old building had served its purpose for many years but a change was needed. If you have not had an opportunity to visit the new facility, I highly encourage that you do just that. The enrollment has changed as well. During the 1995-96 school year, there were 95 sixth graders, 83 seventh graders, and 76 eighth graders totaling 254 students overall. This year, we have a current enrollment of 183 students. Many of the programs offered at Lyons Middle School have remained the same while others have been added or removed. The sports offered 21 years ago included football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, and track. Since then, we have been able to add cross country and tennis. The programs were quite similar as well. 21 years ago,

Builders’ Club was in its first year. This program continues to thrive now. We continue to offer Scholar’s Bowl and Student Council today and look forward to adding a robotics team in the 2017-18 school year. The specific staff numbers have altered slightly with new titles and classes taught as the schedule has changed over the years. While I will refrain from mentioning any names, there are three teachers (all of whom I had the fortune of having as a teacher myself) and 2 other staff members that are still working at Lyons Middle School. It has been a privilege to go from being a student to being a colleague with each of these educators.

While many things have changed over the past two decades, two things remain the same. We have great teachers and staff, and we have great students! I am proud to be back at Lyons Middle School, and I am very excited to see what changes the next 21 years will bring.

- 2016 at Central Elementary -

Events at Central Elementary this year have included Character Education activities, food drives at Christmas time, Halloween walk of food to the Rice County Food Bank, a winter concert, Box Tops For Education drive to raise money for the school and a family bingo night.

We started off our character education year with Buffy Coleman. He is a basketball wizard and entertained students and staff and brought an outstanding message to

our kids. He shared about the hard work and dedication it took for him to hone his skills as a basketball player and that they the students can do the same thing in their daily lives. In October the Bureau of Lectures sent us the Laser Science show and turned our library into a foggy exciting splash of colors. The Bureau also brought in the Chinese Acrobats to perform in our gym. They put on a show for forty five minutes that was truly amazing. The

acrobats that were here were twelve, fourteen and nineteen years old. We will continue throughout the year with more activities and events for our Character Education Program.

Central participated in two food drives. We do our annual Halloween collection and our Christmas drive as well. We were able to collect two thousand three hundred pieces. It was so nice to see the competition between the students and staff as we moved through December

and the close of the first semester. The reward for the collection of goods was a day of movies, pajamas and treats in the classroom.

Our winter concert was a first for our new music teacher. Kaylee Oliver did a wonderful job preparing the students for their concert and it was well received by all.

The staff decided with the success of our food drives that we would challenge out students once again but this time we will collect box

tops to raise money for our school. It will run until the end of April. The funds will be used for a student field trip the last of part April or the first part of May.

On Thursday January 26 we will host our first annual Family Bingo Night. It is a chance for our families to come to school to meet and greet other parents, staff and administration. We are hopeful for a large turnout and an event that will grow over the years to come.