Jazz Band to Perform at State Event and Upcoming PTO Meeting

The JCMS Jazz Band is looking forward to its participation in the Indiana State School Music Association Jazz Contest on Saturday, March 2 at Terre Haute South High School. The band is preparing 3 songs (swing, rock & Latin) for this event which should give all Jazz Band members a chance to show off both their jazz and improvisation "chops". For an opportunity to hear a preview of the band, check them out at the February 6 PTO meeting.

Submitted by
Bob Austin
JCMS Band Director

News from the Library

Book Clubs Enjoy Reading and Pizza

The 7th grade book club is reading Fellowship of the Rings while the 8th grade book club is reading mystery books. Members need to remember to bring their sack lunch to the library on Wednesdays except for Pizza days. Pizza days are January 16, February 20, March 20, April 17 and the last day May 22.

Class Use of Library is High

The library is busy, busy, and busy. Several classes have been in the library. Mrs. Nowlin’s 8th grade Language Arts classes have just finished their research for their I-search papers while Mrs. Carver’s 8th grade science has just begun researching space exploration. African American Artists and the Harlem Renaissance are the topics that Mrs. McQueen’s art classes are currently looking at.

Mr. Duvall’s 8th grade social studies class are reading about individuals who were in the American Revolutionary War while Mr. Keefer’s Language Arts 8th grade students have just finished their biographies.

Mr. Courtney’s 7th grade social studies classes are examining various world history topics and creating web pages about them. Mr. Kennedy’s mass communication classes understand that communication comes in various forms. They are learning to choose and tell stories and also learning to use Power Point to teach their fellow classmates on a topic of their choice.

Come to the library and see Mrs. Poage’s 7th grade Language Arts Picture Books. The students learned about designing picture books and then they created their own picture book that illustrated diversity.

Mr. Kelley’s mass communication class is finishing a web page entry for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Web Page Contest. Each student created a web page about an American Hero. The winners of the contest will be announced at the January 21, 2002 MLK Birthday Celebration. Check out the web page entries at http://www.mccsc.edu/mlkjbc.html.

Special points of interest:

- The Scholastic Book Fair will be in the library at JCMS during the week of January 28th to February 1st, 2002. Students will be able to come to the fair during Advisor Advisee period, throughout the day, and before and after school. Please come and check out the various titles and items for purchase. If any parent is interested in volunteering during this time, please contact Mrs. McGlaun at 330-2451, ext. 223.

- Valentine’s Day dance Friday February 15 sponsored by the Student Council.

- Student Directories now available at school office. Cost is $3.00 payable by cash or check made out to ‘JCMS PTO’

- To subscribe to the PTO news source to receive occasional mailings on events of interest to JCMS parents, send an e-mail message to majordomo@mccsc.edu. The subject line of the e-mail should be blank (empty), and in the body of the message type (without the quotes) “subscribe jemspto”. If you have trouble subscribing, send an e-mail message to owner-jemspto@mccsc.edu.
News from the Library, cont.

Recommended Reading for Young Adults

If you or your family is looking for a good book to read, check out the Young Hoosier Book Award nominees for 2001-2002. A list of the titles can be found at http://www.mccsc.edu/~jcmslib/yhb/yhbhome.htm or stop by the library and pick up a copy of the list. The JCMS Book Club members have also suggested some good books to read, including the Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien, Sabriel by Garth Nix, the Golden Compass trilogy by Philip Pullman, the Harry Potter series, Holes by Louis Sachar, and Alanna, the First Adventure by Tamara Pierce.

Library Receives Donation

Many thanks to Mrs. Rivron and her family. Mrs. Rivron and her daughter Anne donated over 400 dollars worth of books to the library. Mrs. McGlaun and Mrs. Rivron spent four hours at Border’s selecting various books. Because of her family’s donation, there are new foreign language books, various biographies, books about the Holocaust and lots of fiction books. If anyone is interested in donating money or books to the library, please feel free to contact Mrs. McGlaun, 330-2451, ext. 223.

Public Law 221 at JCMS

Last week, on the 7th and 8th of January, the JCMS Public Law 221 School Improvement committee, composed of school faculty, administrators, parents, and community business leaders, met in an ongoing effort to develop a school improvement plan as required by the new Indiana Public Law 221.

Under the new law, schools are categorized by subject areas based on latest results of the ISTEP standardized test. A school is categorized as exemplary, commendable, academic progress, academic watch, or probation in the areas of communication (Language Arts) and problem solving and critical thinking (Math).

Jackson Creek’s initial rankings are commendable in communication (LA) bordering on exemplary. Its ISTEP average score is 1% below the 84% required to be exemplary. The problem solving and critical thinking (Math) score of 79% is 1% below the 80% required to be commendable. A key issue discussed in last week’s meeting is what improvements can be made to reach the goal of a 1% improvement in each topic area? Programs can be eliminated or new ones started up, but in order to decide, one must gather the right data to determine which are effective and which are not?

Prior to Public Law 221, the success or failure of school improvement initiatives (such as DEAR) were the responsibility of the Monroe county superintendent. But Public Law 221 has shifted the responsibility for success/failure from the county administration to the individual schools. Each principal is now responsible for his/her own site-based improvement plan.

JCMS’s solution is the Public Law 221 School Improvement committee. The committee is currently working toward the deadline of having an improvement plan to the county superintendent by March 01, 2002. The deadline for schools to submit their plans to the Indiana Department of Education is June 30, 2002.

Resources to assist the committee are available. JCMS is a member of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA-CASI), a non-profit organization that performs school accreditation and is a resource for schools who voluntarily seek to develop improvement plans. JCMS obtained its accreditation on April 03, 2002 and is now one of 1062 public middle schools nationwide who have voluntarily sought and obtained NCA accreditation.

Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) makes suggested improvements as well. One such suggestion is that students and parents become familiar with the Indiana’s Academic Standards documents in LA and Math that parents received before the Holidays.

JCMS has, over the years, incorporated many programs that have proved to be quite successful in increasing student learning: Drop Everything And Read (DEAR), writing across the curriculum, looping (same teachers for both years), and a Learning Center for additional help, to name a few.

Public Law 221 is controversial. It is costly to implement, and demands more frequent standardized testing than is being done today. In the next issue of the Jaguar Notes we will discuss some of the issues being raised by parents about the new law.

The web site for NCA-CASI is:

http://www.ncacasi.org

and an interesting article directed to parents, “How can I learn about my child’s school”, is available off the ‘For Parents’ link of the NCA main page.

If you are interested in contributing newsworthy items to the next issue of the JCMS newsletter, please e-mail them to plale@cs.indiana.edu.