

YSD | Middle School

YMS Looks To The Future

BY PRINCIPAL TODD DVORACEK
and ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
HEATHER OLSON
Yankton Middle School

The Yankton Middle School has a rich history which has molded the lives of many students as they begin their transitions from elementary to high school; that history runs all the way back to 1889. The goals of a middle school are to nurture the development of responsible and thoughtful young teenagers, while creating environments in which students are challenged to explore, to create, to make decisions and to actively participate in and be accountable for their learning so they can contribute to a global society.

The middle school housed students from seventh through ninth grade on Walnut Street for many years until the construction of the current high school. The Walnut Street location was known as Central School along with a stand-alone building which was called the Garfield School. Garfield also housed the sixth grade students for a period of time as well. After 1975, Garfield was torn down and the middle school housed only seventh and eighth grade students.

In January 1996, the middle school was moved to our current home at 2000 Mulberry Street for seventh and eighth graders. In 1996, the sixth grade students joined us at Mulberry. Today, we have a fabulous facility that meets the needs of our students, teachers, parents and patrons of our community.

The Yankton Middle School hallways are still filled with pride and



YMS students working in class following direction from the SmartBoard and then applying that information on their computers while sharing it with their teachers. This is a great way to give students instant feedback as well as assessing their learning on the spot.

COURTESY PHOTO

tradition of the old high school. Many former YHS students bring their children into the middle school and are in awe of the positive changes the middle school has made in 20 years.

Our school is divided into three grade levels from sixth through eighth grade. As we continue to change with the times, we have different aspects and approaches that are used to reach all students to their highest potential. The modern technology advances have provided

an efficient way to communicate and collaborate as a whole to keep each and every child accountable. Failing is not an option at the middle school level. If students do not understand a concept, it is retaught to understanding. Not doing an assignment is too easy and a way to get out of being accountable for your learning. It is required that students get their assignments done. If they do not, we help them plan for how they need to do it, when they will get it done and who can help

them accomplish this task. Yankton Middle School recently allowed students to utilize technology in the classroom. We have 230 Chrome books and 30 iPads in the middle school. The teachers can check out the carts and use to aid in instruction and learning in their lessons. Along with Chrome books, each teacher has a SmartBoard interactive screen that projects content on a white board in front of the classroom for greater learning. The technology has al-

Past Yankton Middle School Principals:

- Emil Vlasek ??? to 1965
- Lee Kanago 1965 to 1990
- Don Campbell 1990-1992
- Randy Meade 1992-1995
- Wayne Kindle 1995 to 2007
- Kathy Wagner 2007 to 2011
- Todd Dvoracek 2011 to present

lowed our teachers to become more innovative in their lessons and the students to become more interactive, which allows the teachers to increase the levels of differentiated learning for all of our students.

Academics are not the only thing that we provide for our students at YMS. We have great extracurricular activities that all students are allowed to participate. Some of the activities include: student council, band, orchestra, football, basketball, volleyball, chorus, Science Olympiad, yearbook, oral Interpretation, track, golf, cross country, wrestling, soccer, Math Counts and geography bee.

Yankton Middle School has a long history of academic and activity excellence. We strive to make our middle school the best in South Dakota. At YMS, we continue to update and improve all our facilities to meet ADA compliances and the needs of our students, families, teachers and patrons. The tradition and pride that our community has in Yankton Public Schools is strong and we will need for that support to continue as we provide a firm foundation for a lifetime of success.

Webster

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childhood programs, the additional sections have been added: 2007 — three sections of Preschool; 2008 — one additional section of Jr. Kindergarten; 2009 — three additional sections of Preschool.

Webster Elementary is very proud to currently be the home of the district's Preschool and Jr. Kindergarten programs, along with one section of each: Kindergarten — fifth grade. Webster has close to 290 students and

is very proud to have the highest enrollment in many years! There are approximately 35 staff members who help meet the daily needs of the Webster Winners. Many of those staff members are traveling personnel who share time between two or more buildings.

Webster School has been fortunate enough to have been the proud pilot school for many programs that are up and running today. We have implemented the Sack Pack program, the daily Fruit and Vegetable program, the OLWEUS anti-bullying program and the Recess Before Lunch program. All of these programs have been welcomed by our parents, staff and students, and have had much success! We are also very proud of the

implementation of technology into our current classrooms with Red Cat amplification systems, Smart Boards, Chrome Books, computer labs, surveillance cameras and iPad pilot classrooms. In addition, we have improved our playground by adding an early childhood play structure and a new soft surface under our swings. We are gaining momentum and getting closer to our fundraising goal to purchase new equipment for the older Webster Winners, too. Our parent organization, WOW, hopes to have funds in place this year to move forward with these improvements!

Whether students and families have been at Webster for one year or many, the staff is

always eager to welcome each person by name. It's our goal to make every child feel important and welcome, so we like to live by the motto: "Webster School — Where everybody knows your name!" This is very advantageous to the families of Webster, also, as the staff has the opportunity to interact with our parents on a personal level and get to know them all quite well.

Many past and current Webster parents refer to the school as the "Best Kept Secret." If you would like to visit the Webster Winners or have questions, feel free to contact us. The Webster Winners are proud of their successes both in and out of the classroom!

Decades

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Girls who were considered fashionable wore men's Swiss sweaters and costume jewelry. Boys were to wear tweed pants and lumberjack shirts. And the ever-present bobby socks were a must for both sexes.

'50s: STUDENTS MOVE TO A NEW SCHOOL

By Erin Cihak

Throughout the '50s, editors stressed the importance of remembering God and the Bible during such holidays as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Today, no reference toward God is used in school newspapers.

The big social activity at this time was "rodding around." Therefore, there was concern about accidents, especially with YHS students involved.

During the 1955-56 school year, a bond issue to allocate money to build a new high school was passed by an overwhelming majority, 1,926-474. The building of the new school was delayed in 1957 due to a flood, but it was finished for the beginning of the 1958-59 school year. The ninth graders stayed down at the old high school.

'60s: YOUTH URGED TO FACE RESPONSIBILITIES

By Kristy Trimble

Students said they had a responsibility to acquire a good education. Perfect attendance was a goal, and the honor roll was considered prestigious.

Most students believed there would be a third World War in their lifetimes.

Short skirts with long stockings, large beads and pointed shoes were the fashion, and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy set the example for fashion trends.

Many additions were made to the school beginning in 1966. A library, lecture hall, 16 classrooms, two study halls, a health room and restrooms were added while the industrial arts, cafeteria and physical education areas were enlarged. These changes were made to accommodate 1,200 students.

Throughout the 1960s, students set and accomplished goals. There were saddened by the assassination of President Kennedy, had mixed views over Vietnam, and were astounded when Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the surface of the moon.

'70s: FIRST GIRLS ALLOWED INTO Y CLUB

By Kelly Clough

Marijuana ... disco fever ... long hair ... bell bottoms ... teenagers wore long, shaggy hair and glittery sequined T-shirts. It was the '70s.

During the '70s, YHS underwent renovations to make the high school a more adequate facility. The vocational wing was added in the mid-'70s and additions to the girls' locker room came in the late '70s. The parking lot, which today could not be imagined as gravel, was surfaced in the '70s after years of students complaining about gravel, ruts and mud. A malt machine was added to the cafeteria to "shake up the school lunch program." The flavors were chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. The cost was 20 cents.

But there were changes inside the school also. The girls' basketball and gymnastics teams changed their names to Gazelles in 1975. In the early '70s, a change in courses allowed students more freedom in choosing English classes. A new detention program began that included an hour of staying after school in the infamous Room 211. The first females were allowed in the Y Club despite some chauvinistic opinions that the girls should not belong to the club.

Visitors to Yankton included Tom Brokaw, a 1958 YHS graduate, and Abigail Van Buren, better known as "Dear Abby." In 1975, science instructor Earl Reese was injured in liquid nitrogen explosion, but he only required eight stitches from the piece of thermos that scraped him.

'80s: COMPUTERS BECOME FORCE IN EDUCATION

By Jessica Huennkens

The 1980s have been anything but simple for students who attend YHS and for the rest of the world. In December 1980, one

of America's greatest heroes and friends died. John Lennon, a musician and political activist, started an era geared toward nonviolence and love.

The thought that drugs needed consideration and that alcohol was a mounting problem began in the early '80s. Since then, various schools and nationwide organizations have formed, pledging to win the war. T.O.R.C.H. (Teams on The Road to Chemical Health) was formed in YHS in 1987 and has continued since.

A computer class was first added to YHS in 1980. Physics teacher James List was quoted as saying the purpose of the class was, "to give our students a prayer." By 1986, YHS had a completely new computer room full of 25 new Apple II Es.

Fashion went from Gloria Vanderbilt to Spirit. Levis, however, have always stayed in fashion. Hair styles went from the feather look to the French braid to long and sexy for girls, and from medium long with a perm to mohawks to long for guys.

Students felt the pressure rise as the South Dakota Board of Regents slowly added to the amount of credits needed to graduate every year. The pressure was also felt by some students as the percentage of teenage pregnancies rose dramatically.

Overall, YHS students of the '80s have seen a new principal, the first woman candidate for vice-president and Haley's comet.

'90s: THE END OF A MILLENNIUM

By Kerry Hacecky, January 2000

A new school, open enrollment, seven-period days, clothes from Spirit to Tommy Hilfiger, and a war on drugs and alcohol described the YHS of the '90s.

The new Yankton High School was built at 1801 Summit in 1996. The high school and Summit Activities Center meet the needs of the students' population and the community.

The South Dakota Legislature approved open enrollment in 1997. Open enrollment gave students the chance to transfer from one school district into another school district. Not many students used the easy access of transferring but, in some cases, YHS brought out-of-town teens to school in Yankton.

Mrs. Mary Ticknor became the Yankton High School principal in 1999 after Dr. David Bitter resigned to become the state director of the North Central Association in Iowa.

Seven-period days brought more time to venture into the arts but also managed to end early-bird classes. Industrial Technology, a new computer technology class, offers students many career choices, and music has become part of the school day. Computer advancements brought change every year and the Web and Internet became part of students' everyday life.

From tight stretch pants to boxers showing, the 1990s brought a completed fashion change to YHS. The early '90s saw big hair and perms, floral designs, pinks and purples, and tapered at the leg jeans. Over the years, fashion changed tremendously, and the late '90s students preferred baggy jeans, hooded sweatshirts, long skirts and designer clothes.

The "war on drugs" seemed to be a struggle as the percentage of students using alcohol and drugs increased dramatically. Yankton School District was a problem with their own students as percentages showed an increase in marijuana up nearly 30 percent between 1995 and 1998. Procedures such as drug dogs searching the school, police in the parking lot and probation or boot camp as a consequence to teenagers using these substances attempted to win the war on drugs.

The Persian Gulf Crisis affected gas prices in 1990, and Desert Storm opened every student's eyes to war as they daily viewed it on Channel One, a television news program new to the high school.

Past Yankton High School Principals:

- William M. Bristol 1875 to 1886
- A.F. Bartlett 1886 to 1889
- Jay D. Stay 1889 to 1894
- H.L. Peet 1894 to 1895
- Maria McVay 1895 to 1896
- Alice Dewey 1896 to 1897
- H. H. Bass 1897 to 1898
- Mr. McDonald 1898 to 1900
- Margaret Calvin 1900 to 1903
- A.E. Farmer 1903 to 1907
- William Kempthorne 1907 to 1909
- J.C. McComb 1909 to 1910
- E. I. Cook 1910 to 1911
- William L. Carberry 1911 to 1913
- Marie Lawton 1913 to 1917
- Arvil S. Barr 1917 to 1918
- F. F. Schaeffer 1918 to 1921
- R.D. Gardner 1921 to 1922
- Chester A. Beaver 1922 to 1929
- Ralph E. Nichol 1929 to 1945
- Donald R. Snowden 1945 to 1961
- Kenneth Henseler 1961 to 1985
- David Bitter 1985 to 1999
- Mary Ticknor 1999 to 2004
- Scott Lepke 2004 to 2007
- Wayne Kindle 2007 to 2013
- Jennifer Johnke 2013 to Present

President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky showed Americans just how interested we really are in other peoples' business and caused history's second impeachment thanks to special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

The North Central Association reviewed the high school's skill improvement plan to improve writing and study skills in 1999.

As the millennium came toward an end, schools such as Columbine High School in Colorado experiences school shootings, and the realization of what teenagers could do woke up all schools, including ours. Questions of harassment and violence became issues yet to be resolved.

The '90s were full of change. YHS began open enrollment and computers were used every day. Who would have ever thought we would find ourselves in this new facility at a beautiful location with great teachers, students and support staff?

2000's TO PRESENT: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

By Dr. Jennifer Johnke

The 2000s to the present have brought increased requirements in education and increased incorporation of technology into the classroom, as well as students' lives.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 introduced high-stakes testing to Yankton High School. Students were first

tested in the areas of reading and mathematics. Science was then added. The tests were required to be aligned with state standards. Results of the tests were made public yearly.

The addition of the Common Core Standards created national standards in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. The standards have been implemented into the classrooms of YHS. Students at YHS are now tested on these standards through an online test, the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Activities at YHS changed with the addition of new sports for students. Competitive cheer and dance made a debut in the state of South Dakota in 2007. Yankton High School held the first competitive competition in the state. Boys' and girls' soccer were added in 2014 as the majority of the large schools in South Dakota voted to sanction the sport.

Technology changes have been prevalent throughout the halls of Yankton High School. Gateway computers filled the computer labs during the 2000s. These computers aged and were replaced by more efficient models and the number of computer labs in the building increased. The 2013-2014 school years welcomed the addition of mobile devices with Chrome Book labs. Additionally, a pilot program was conducted to allow students to use their cell phones and electronic devices at YHS. The success of the program allowed students to continue to utilize these devices into the 2014-2015 school year.

Dual-credit courses were added and expanded at Yankton High School. Students could take AP U.S. History, AP Government, AP Calculus, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Spanish and AP Composition and Literature for dual credit through Mount Marty College. Dual-credit college algebra was added during the 2013-2014 school year.

Career and Technology Education (CTE) became a focal point with the Governor's CTE Grant that was awarded to YHS in 2014. This grant allowed the expansion of CTE and additional dual-credit courses for students. Students were able to learn skill such as welding, 3-D printing and automobiles. Dual-credit courses through Mitchell Technical Institute in welding, anatomy and physiology, and IT Essentials: Networking; and dual-credit courses through Black Hills State University in computer-aided drafting and machining processes were added during the 2014-2015 school year.