

# VINTON-SHELLSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

—WHERE CHARACTER COUNTS!

"The Mission of the Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District is to improve the quality of lives and assist individuals in becoming contributing members of society through the accumulation and application of knowledge."

## Special points of interest:

- Feb. 11—School Board Meeting @ Middle School, 5:30 pm
- Feb. 15—2 Hr. Early Dismissal Prof. Development
- Feb. 18—CLASSES Snow Make-up Day
- Feb. 19—Freshman Orientation @ VSHS, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- Feb. 20—ACT Testing Gr. 9-11, VSHS, 8:00 am
- Feb. 22—Winter Formal Dance, VSHS, 8:00 – 11:00 pm
- Mar. 1—Voyager Spring Show, VSMS, 7:00 pm

## Class of 2023 High School Orientation Night

High school staff and students will welcome the Class of 2023 (current 8<sup>th</sup> graders) and their parents to a high school orientation night on Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at the V-S High School. The agenda for the event, which starts at 6:30 PM, will include:

a) a brief presentation by the high school guidance department staff on high school academic requirements and the course selection process for the 2019-20 school year; b) the opportunity for students and parents to interact with representatives from each academic department as they tour the high school building; and c) informational tables, staffed by coaches and student participants, for extra and co-curricular activities available to high school students. All current 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents are encouraged to attend this "orientation to high school" night! If you have any questions about this event, please contact VSHS Academic Advisor Sandy Hamilton (ph. 436-5708 or [sandy.hamilton@vscsd.org](mailto:sandy.hamilton@vscsd.org)).

The district's Calendar Committee will soon be working on the 2019-2020 school calendar. We would like parent/community input about calendar options to help guide our work. Thank you in advance for sharing your opinions!

[https://vscsd.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9MMWV1C6L4cunX](https://vscsd.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9MMWV1C6L4cunX)

To the Vinton-Shellsburg School Community,

What a January we had with weather and weather decisions! On average, we have 2-3 snow days each year; this year it seems like it might be 2-3 snow days each week!

We are starting the 2019 calendar year and we are well underway into planning for the 2019-20 school year. We are spending time developing next year's calendar, the budget, staffing plans, summer building projects, and the list goes on!

We recently surveyed staff and community members with about 130 staff surveys and 275 community surveys returned. Some of the results include:

- ◇ The majority want school to start on Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> (versus Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> which is the first date that is allowable by Iowa law).
- ◇ The majority want the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a no school day.
- ◇ The majority want to have the Friday before Christmas be an early out and very few are interested in going up until Monday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>!
- ◇ There is not a clear consensus on when to return from the holiday break. It will be either Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> or Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Whichever day is selected will impact the date for the end of the school year.
- ◇ The surveys show that most people want a spring break but there is limited agreement on how long it should be or whether or not it includes snow make-up days. I anticipate we will develop a calendar that would allow for a break day around Easter. There were several comments asking the district to do a full-week the same time the state universities have spring break.
- ◇ Fridays seem to be the best day to have professional development; plus, this provides the least disruption to our preschool schedule as they do not meet on Fridays.
- ◇ The vast majority of both groups want to have snow days built into the schedule.
- ◇ Community/Parents did not have strong views on how we do Parent-Teacher conferences although there were requests to have them on a similar schedule across the district.
- ◇ Many people do not have a preference about when graduation is scheduled. It would be difficult to move it off Memorial Day weekend without making that decision a year or two in advance to assist families in their celebration planning.

There were many comments included on the surveys. A few things I would respond to:

### **Why don't we have a year-round calendar or a balanced schedule with a break every nine weeks?**

**The short answer – because it's against the law.** We considered developing one a few years ago and there are many advantages to having students attend on a year-round basis with more breaks built in but the same number of days overall. However, when the state legislature passed a law with the earliest start date of August 23<sup>rd</sup>, they also included language prohibiting high schools from pursuing a year-round calendar. It would be difficult to have one calendar for K-8 and another for 9-12 as it would increase our transportation, food service, and probably other expenses. Plus, many families have older students provide daycare for younger students so schedules need to be similar.

**Why don't you do all the professional development days before or after the school year? This is probably the most frequently asked question.** Much of the work at our professional development sessions focuses on student work – analyzing it and then determining next steps. Other sessions focus on learning instructional strategies, then teachers have time to practice them with students, and then there is additional training as follow-up in a future PD session. If professional development time was only in the summer, there would be no student work to analyze and there would be no opportunity to implement new instructional strategies and then do more work around the strategies. However, we are researching how we can do more of our curriculum writing and coordination during the summer months or other times outside the regular school days.

**Do we really need to have snow days scheduled? Don't we have "extra" days in our calendar because of going to hours?** The survey responses we receive back overwhelming request we build snow days into the next year's calendar. While we may not "need" some of the days to meet the 1080 minimum number of minutes, we have exceeded the minimum and we believe that is one of the reasons our students' achievement has been improving each year. With January's snow days, we are considering how we can adjust our calendar and use "hours" to our advantage.

**Can you change how parent-teacher conferences are arranged?** Some families want all the buildings to be on the same schedule for conferences and other families want different schedules so it isn't so challenging to make it to multiple buildings. Other families have requested the middle and high schools consider better scheduling techniques so parents can be more efficient in how long it takes to participate.

*Continued inside..*

The traditional Iowa Assessments are now the **New Iowa Assessment of Student Academic Progress**. Not only has the name changed, but so have several other features:

- \*Social Studies is no longer included.
- \*There will be a writing portion in the Language Arts.
- \*Testing will be done on-line (i.e. on a computer) with special accommodations made for some students.

- \*Science will only be tested in grades 5, 8 and 10.
- \*Tests are no longer timed.
- \*All schools across Iowa will be giving them this spring (instead of throughout the school year).

Students in grades 3-11 will take the new assessments between March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 17<sup>th</sup>. Each building will determine the exact dates. We have been told to expect the results back sometime after August and it may even be in October. The Iowa Department of Education is working with Pearson Access and more information is available at <http://iowa.pearsonaccessnext.com/>.

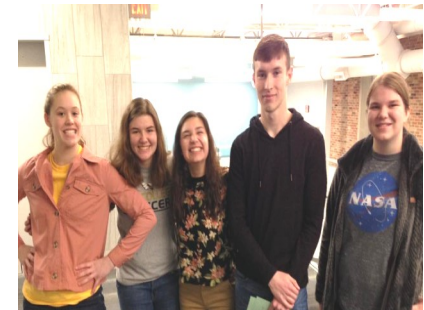


We thoroughly enjoyed our time at The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was quite a walk, but definitely worth it. For most of them, this was the first taste of cathedral sound, and I enjoyed watching their faces discover the sound. We have great kids!  
M. Martin

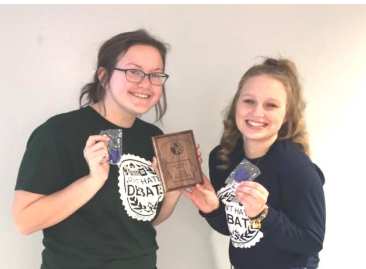
The V-S and Benton Community Speech teams attended the SE District Large Group Speech Contest - Mini make-up. Congratulations to this Musical Theatre Group receiving a Division I rating and going to state performing Little Shop of Horrors. #VSPROUD #VSCSD Katelyn Humiston, Brynn Johnson, Jeremiah Brown, Andrew Wirth, Olivia Coder and Casey Funk.



These awesome kids participated in Dorian Vocal Festival at Luther



WaMaC Speech Tournament at South Tama



CONGRATULATIONS to Morgan and Grace on advancing to the Octofinal Round at the Iowa High School Speech Association's State Debate Tournament at DMACC ! They were one of the top eight teams in their division.

The Group - Front: Natalie Armstrong, Megan Hendrickson, Madi Atkinson, Lucille Lindsey, Katelyn Humiston, Keira Ott, Back: Grace Petrzelka, Morgan White, Lexi Miller, Javier Munoz, Sadie Mauer, Eli Powers, Joanna Hendrickson and Isaac Lindauer.

## SHELLSBURG ELEMENTARY

January 18<sup>th</sup> our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students got to participate in a field trip that has become a new tradition at Shellsburg Elementary: our Ski Trip. For the past four years, we have taken our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to Sundown Mountain in Dubuque to teach them the recreational activity of downhill skiing.

All of our students get the opportunity to go through a series of 8 stations where they get lessons on the skills it takes to ski. These range from just learning how to put your skis on and stand, all the way to weaving in and out of cones while going downhill. By the end of the day, our students are all skiers, at varying levels. They are able to learn at a pace that is comfortable to them, and they can put their skills to the test from the bunny hill up to more challenging hills. We also invite all parents that want to go, and we usually have between 35 and 50 adults that go along. Many times skiing is a new skill for them, too.

What I love about this field trip is the process of learning that it promotes: overcoming fears, perseverance, and the growth mindset. Most kids start the day with no clue how to ski and nervousness when they see the ski hills. As the day goes on, falling and occasional tears of frustration turn into wide smiles, laughter, and not wanting to leave. Students leave with a new set of skills and a background in skiing they can continue to use the rest of their lives. When parents get to go through this learning experience with their kids, it is especially satisfying.

While skiing can be expensive, we are given a very good price, which we are able to cover with a local grant and some fundraising (this year a school dance and movie night). We are glad we are able to give our students this experience they may not otherwise ever get. If you ever get a chance to go with our group, I would highly recommend the experience.

As a quick reminder, 3- and 4- year old preschool and kindergarten sign-up are available on our district website. If you go to [vcsd.org](http://vcsd.org) go to the Shellsburg Elementary page and there is a link to sign up. We ask that you do this as soon as you are able, as we are starting to get our programming in place for next year. Please spread the word on this to anyone you know that may have a preschool or kindergartener for next year.





Continued from front....

**Would you schedule all the Back-to-School Nights the night before the first day of classes?** We have found this to be a challenge to do for two reasons. First, there is always a lot of energy and excitement around the back-to-school night and it doesn't lend itself to getting into the routine of school by getting to bed at a reasonable hour. It is also challenging to have all four buildings on the same night for families with students in more than one building. Finally, next year it is quite likely the first day of school will be on a Monday and it would not work so well to have the events on Sunday!

**Can you make sure students are done before Memorial Day?** Next year's Memorial Day is fairly early (May 25<sup>th</sup>) and we will be starting later than most years (August 26<sup>th</sup>) plus having Christmas and New Year's Days on Wednesday mean the holiday break will be longer. For students to be done by May 23<sup>rd</sup>, we would have to have very few, if any, breaks throughout the school year.

**Why do you have to start so early? Start later and go later into June!** My experience has shown that students are better learners in August than they are in June. When Little League and other "summer" activities start, it seems harder for kids to focus on learning. Many parents report their kids are ready to go back to school in August – even sooner than we start – while other parents report their kids are ready for summer once June 1<sup>st</sup> rolls around.

I have joked that some families would say the perfect calendar would start after Labor Day, end before Memorial Day, include two weeks off at Christmas, another week off for spring break, and have a few other breaks built in. The reality is that would leave us very little time for teaching and learning – which is our highest priorities!

There were several other questions/comments that were on the survey that didn't pertain to the calendar directly. I would welcome the opportunity to answer and respond to them but the writers didn't leave contact information. If you were one of them – or if you have a question or comment that has something to do with the school – please contact me! My phone number is 319.436.5685 and my e-mail is [maryjo.hainstock@vscsd.org](mailto:maryjo.hainstock@vscsd.org). I welcome the opportunity to visit about what is going well (or not so well) in our district.

Respectfully,  
Mary Jo Hainstock, Superintendent

### SNOW MAKE-UP DAY RECOMMENDATIONS BEING PRESENTED TO THE BOARD

Students had snow days on January 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30 and 31. The administrative team considered the following as they developed their recommendation for revisions to the 2018-19 calendar for the school board's review at their February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Students missed seven days plus most of another day in January due to weather conditions.
- About 100 students have committed to participate in a music trip that leaves on June 3.
- Several staff members are involved with the music trip.
- The district bases its calendar on 1080 contact hours with students; our original calendar exceeded that.

The recommendations include:

- The early out on February 1<sup>st</sup> would be cancelled and students attend a full day.
- Students will attend school on **Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>** (originally a snow make-up day).
- Students will attend school on **Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>** (originally a professional development day for teachers).
- Students will attend school on **Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>** (originally a professional development day for teachers).
- Students will attend school on **May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>** with the early out on the 29<sup>th</sup> rescheduled for the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Additional snow days may require additional adjustments in the calendar. Once the board takes action on any modifications, they will be posted on the district's website.

We had 7 competition teams in ELP this year.

1 Mock Trial team made up of nine 8th grade girls that competed in Burlington in November. They worked very hard, putting in many hours outside of school, staying many nights until 8:00 p.m. to prepare for the competition. The students had to learn a lot of law terminology along with official rules and procedures of the courtroom. They were also given a case and had to prepare for both the Defense and the Prosecution. Although we did not advance to state, they did a fantastic job, receiving some very high marks from the judges and they represented our school very well.

2 Future City teams - one 7th Grade, one 8th Grade that competed in Cedar Rapids in January. Both teams worked very hard putting in numerous hours after school and on some weekends to prepare. Future City is very time consuming and consists of 5 main parts that are all separately scored, then combined to make an overall score. This year's theme was creating a city at least 100 years in the future that would be resilient if a natural disaster would happen to occur (earthquake, hurricane, etc.) with the main focus being how to create a power grid that could be up and working again in a very short amount of time. (This idea stemmed from what occurred in Puerto Rico last year.) The parts include the Project Plan, Virtual City, Essay, 3D Model, and Live Presentation. Both teams did a great job. The seventh-grade team even received the award for Best Essay that included over 40 teams in the competition.

4 Lego League Teams - two 6th grade, one 7th grade, and one 8th grade that competed in Dubuque the first weekend in December. Just like the other teams they put in a lot of hours after school. Students programmed robots that they designed out of legos to perform certain tasks on an obstacle course, created a presentation related to this year's theme of solving problems that the human body might have while in space for more than one year, and focused on Core Values that include competing while using manners, respect, and honesty. (The idea comes from the current planning that is going on for a manned trip to Mars.) All the teams did a great job!



# FEBRUARY 2019

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<p><b>Senior Citizen Activity Passes</b> are available for Vinton-Shellsburg CSD residents who are age 55 or older; stop by the Superintendent's Office at 1502 C Ave., Vinton.</p>	<p>V-SCSD EQUITY STATEMENT</p> <p>The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District provides equal educational and employment opportunities and will not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District shall take affirmative action in recruitment, appointment, assignment and advancement of women and men, minorities and disabled. Inquiries regarding compliance with equal educational or employment opportunities and/or affirmative action shall be directed to Becky Lutgen, Equity Coordinator, Vinton-Shellsburg CSD, 1502 C Avenue, Vinton, Iowa 52349 or becky.lutgen@vscsd.org. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, or the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education in Chicago, IL.</p>			<p><b>1 Day 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ ISU Honor Band</li> <li>◇ JV/V BOWL vs. Central DeWitt (Berry's Lanes), 4:00 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB vs. W. Delaware, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB @ W Delaware, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB vs. Center Point-Urbana, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ FS/JV/V G BB @ Center Point-Urbana, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ Band Soup Supper (rescheduled from 1/25), VSHS Commons, 5:00-7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ V B SW Districts @ Southeast Polk HS, 12:00 pm</li> <li>◇ ISU Honor Band</li> <li>◇ Speech Large Group State @ CR Kennedy, 8:00 am</li> <li>◇ V WR Sectionals @ West Delaware, 12:00 pm</li> <li>◇ FS/V G BB vs. Independence, 2:00/3:30 pm</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Groundhog Day</b></p>
<p><b>4 Day 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ 7 B BB vs. Williamsburg, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB @ Williamsburg (Mary Welsh), 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB vs. Clear Creek-Amana, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ JV/V G BB @ Central DeWitt, 5:00/6:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 Day 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ JV/V/FS G BB @ Williamsburg, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB @ Williamsburg, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ V WR Dual Team Regionals @ TBA, 6:00 pm</li> <li>◇ V BOWL vs. Independence, (Berry's Lanes) 4:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 Day 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ FS/JV/V G BB vs. Benton, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm (Senior Night)</li> <li>◇ Band Boosters Meeting, VSHS, 6:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>7 Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Festival of Bands @ UNI</li> <li>◇ V BOWL vs. Columbus Catholic, (Berry's Lanes) 3:30 pm</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB vs. Solon, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB @ Solon, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10 @ Independence (West Elem.), 4:30/6:00pm</li> <li>◇ V B BB @ Independence HS, 7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>8 Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Festival of Bands @ UNI</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB @ Williamsburg (Mary Welsh), 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB vs. Williamsburg, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 10/V B BB vs. W. Delaware, 6:00/7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Festival of Bands @ UNI</li> <li>◇ V WR Districts @ Central DeWitt, 12:00 pm</li> <li>◇ B V SW State, University of Iowa, 12:00 pm</li> <li>◇ V BOWL WaMaC Tourney @ Lightning Lanes (Manchester), 11:00 am</li> <li>◇ V G BB 1st Round Regionals @ West Marshall H.S., 7:00 pm</li> </ul>
<p><b>10 Sunday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ G BB All-Conference Meeting @ Marion, 1:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>12 Day 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ V BOWL Districts @ May City Lanes (CR) 10:00 am</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB South Tama MS (Toledo), 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB vs. South Tama, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB @ Marion, 4:30/ 6:00/7:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>13 Day 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Booster Club Meeting, VSHS Commons, 6:00 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB @ Benton, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm</li> <li>◇ V G BB 2nd Round Regionals @ West Marshall H.S., 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>14 Day 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Tallcorn Jazz Festival @ UNI</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB @ Mount Vernon MS, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB vs. Mount Vernon, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 9/10/V B BB vs. Central DeWitt, 4:30/6:00/7:30 pm (Senior Night)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Valentine's Day</b></p>	<p><b>15 Day 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2 HR. EARLY DISMISSAL Prof. Dev.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ West Division Boys Basketball All-Conference Meeting, VSHS, 6:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ U of I Band/Choir Honor Festival</li> <li>◇ Speech All-State Large Group @ Ames</li> <li>◇ V G BB Regional Finals @ BCLUW, 7:00 pm</li> </ul>
<p><b>11 Day 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ B/G V Track Practice may begin</li> <li>◇ 7 B BB vs. Marion, 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ 8 B BB @ Marion (Vernon MS), 4:15 pm</li> <li>◇ School Board Meeting @ Middle School, 5:30 pm</li> <li>◇ FFA Chapter Meeting, VSHS, 6:30 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT 2/14—2/16</b></p>				<p><b>17 Sunday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ U of I Honor Choir</li> </ul>
<p><b>18 Day 2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IN SESSION (Snow Make-up Day)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ V B BB 1st Round Districts, TBA, 7:00 pm</li> <li>◇ V BOWL State @ Cadillac Lanes (Waterloo), 10:00 am</li> <li>◇ Individual Speech, WaMaC West Divisional @ Independence, 4:30 pm</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>President's Day</b></p>	<p><b>19 Day 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Freshman Orientation (Class of 2023 &amp; Parents) @ VSHS Auditorium, 6:30—8:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 Day 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ ACT Testing for Gr. 9th-11th, VSHS, 8:00 am</li> <li>◇ FFA Sub District @ HCC, 9:00 am</li> </ul>	<p><b>21 Day 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ V B BB 2nd Round Districts, 7:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>22 Day 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Coe College Jazz Band Festival</li> <li>◇ Winter Formal Dance, HS Commons, 8:00—11:00 pm</li> </ul>	<p><b>23</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Speech District Individuals @ Cedar Valley Christian, C. R.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NATIONAL FFA WEEK 2/18—2/25</b></p>					
<p><b>25 Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ V B BB Substate, TBD</li> </ul>	<p><b>26 Day 2</b></p>	<p><b>27 Day 3</b></p>	<p><b>28 Day 4</b></p>	<p><b>March 1 Day 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2 HR. EARLY DISMISSAL Prof. Dev.</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ NEIBA Jazz Festival, Independence</li> <li>◇ Voyagers Spring Show, VSMS, 7:00pm</li> </ul>
<p><b>GIRL'S STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT 2/25—3/1</b></p>					



**DIFFERENCE MAKER**— Barb Rego (volunteer extraordinaire and HS cook) secured a \$1000 grant to support the needs of MS and HS students who face food insecurity. She will be working closely with the counselors in both buildings. What a Difference Maker Barb is to our kids!

**Snow Make-up Days**  
 January 22 - school on February 18  
 January 23 - school on May 30  
 January 25 - school on May 31

A "draft" revised calendar is available on-line. A board approved revised 2018-19 calendar will come out after the February 11, 2019 meeting.