



Blue & White

A Weekly Production from the MHS Journalism Class

P.O. Box 580-Montezuma, IA 50171- www.montezuma-schools.org/BlueWhite.aspx

MHS Winter Concert

Band and choir directors prepare students for performance.

By Brayden Stockman
As winter break approaches and students' spirits run high, the Montezuma Fine Arts are preparing to perform at their annual winter concert.

Montezuma band director Carri Burnett and Montezuma choir director Mary Pohlmann have been preparing for about a month, and they are excited to show off the talents of the Montezuma students at the concert.

First to perform for the high school is the band, directed by Carri Burnett, who has been directing the band for three years. The band will be performing three songs as an entire band, and one song with the choir, with all of the band players who do not also sing in the choir. "Our concert pieces are a good mixture of many holiday

favorites," says Burnett. Burnett has been working hard to make sure that the band sounds the best it can, saying, "We started working on the music in November. All the students have been preparing in lessons and in group band. We like to listen to recordings a lot to help us learn the musical aspects."

While it is sometimes difficult for Burnett to work around some of the students' schedules, she makes sure that the band is completely ready for the concert.

Because Burnett has been working so hard to make the band sound great, she is extremely excited for performing at the concert, stating, "I'm looking forward to seeing the students doing their best and enjoy playing the music for an audi-

ence. It's always fun to see how it comes together."

She is also excited for the basketball game the day after, as she is inviting multiple alumni of the Montezuma band to play with the pep band. "This is the first year we're inviting alumni back, and we're really excited to see them again and play as a band," says Burnett.

After the band performs, the choir will step onto the risers to sing three individual songs before their joint piece with the band.

Choir director Mary Pohlmann believes that picking these songs is the most difficult part of preparing for the concert, stating that the hardest part of the concert is "choosing music that provides a variety for the concert but also is triggered towards dif-

ferent aspects of musical growth for the students."

As with Burnett, Pohlmann has been preparing for the winter concert since the Veteran's Day performance, saying, "[We have been preparing] through daily rehearsals and in-depth study of the musical scores and their meanings."

After all these rehearsals, Pohlmann is excited for the students' performance at the concert, stating, "I am most excited to celebrate the musical growth that the students have made this semester with their performance."

The winter concert will begin at 6:30 on Thursday, December 14 for the 5th and 6th graders' first time performing with the high school, and the junior high and high school will begin around 7:15.



MHS MUSICAL DIRECTORS: Mrs. Carri Burnett and Mrs. Mary Pohlmann have been working diligently to prepare the band and choir for the Christmas concert. The concert is December 14 at 6:30 pm.

Photo credit: Brayden Stockman

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How does standardized testing help our students

By Chase Talbert
Recently, Montezuma High School students had to take the Iowa Assessments, and besides their being required by the state, students often wonder why they are even taking them.

These tests shortened the morning classes for several days throughout the week and take away precious learning time away from the students.

The company that creates these tests is called Pearson, and they also check these tests. The students' goal on these tests is to get the most questions correct, thus earning a high score, much like the ACT or SAT tests.

Is there any correlation between these test scores and a student's grade, though? Our elementary principal for the last eight years, Mr. Darin Jones, believes that there is a correlation between students getting good grades and then doing well on these tests, but the correlation is not major.

There is a myriad of reasons as to why students may or may not do well on the tests; for example, every student is different, some are just better at this particular type of testing than others, and lots of

other internal and external factors in a student's life.

In both the high school and elementary, the most important part of the Iowa Assessments is not that the students are getting the highest scores possible, it is that they're improving in the areas that they struggle in, regardless of good or bad grades.

Montezuma Community Schools does this in a variety of ways, firstly they break the students into groups of around ten, hopefully lessening their stress during the test by not being surrounded by thirty other students and also allowing the test administrators to better monitor the students. The school also accommodates students who may have difficulty taking the test within the time period allotted and are thus given more time to complete their tests.

Montezuma High School has also recently began giving practice ACT tests to the students from the freshman to the junior classes. School Secondary Principal for the last nine years/Athletic Director beginning this year, Brian Moretz, explained their reasoning for this as being that the ACT, unlike the Iowa Assessments, is actu-

ally useful to the students later in their lives. The reason they have begun practicing the test is so that during their first actual test they aren't overwhelmed with the time limit for each test and the daunting task of four hours of nothing but filling in bubbles and stressing about how well they did or didn't do.

Along with the ACT practice tests, high school students are also learning strategies through ACT Prep classes, such as how to read and answer an excerpt quickly, and guessing instead of leaving questions blank. Mr. Moretz believes that the practice tests will benefit the students greatly, with the aim of them being their scores improving and becoming a stepping stone into their futures.

Montezuma Community Schools may put an emphasis on standardized testing because they want their students to be able to do them efficiently and test well. However their true goal is not to make the school look like it has the best test takers or smartest students, it is to take the information generated by the seemingly useless tests and use it to improve their student's education.

Varsity girls basketball off to a great start

By Carrie Jennings
As fall slowly bleeds into winter, there are changes in the air that we know comes every year, yet we are still often caught off-guard when the days grow shorter and the air becomes colder.

These are not the only changes we see in winter, though. We are met with another great excitement besides the promise of holidays and vacations: the excitement of the start of the 2017-2018 Montezuma High School basketball season.

November 6th marked the first day of the season as it was when practices began. The girls are off to a fantastic start yet again this year with both the varsity and junior varsity girls' teams having won six games each and losing one thus far.

Janel Burgess, the varsity girls' basketball coach this year, had much praise to sing for her girls. "So far, the season has been absolutely wonderful," she beams. "There's still room to improve, but they're doing very well. [The girls] are a joy to coach and mentor."

Burgess has always enjoyed impacting her students and players in a positive way, and she plans on doing that this year by not focusing on wins and losses. Instead, she wants to stay more focused on helping her girls achieve all of their goals for the season.

While each player has her own personal goals, the overall goal for the team is,

according to Burgess, "to reach our fullest potential by the end of the season."

The plan to reach this overall goal is to "stay focused on... getting better at offense and practicing more. I also need to help them to continue to understand that their last game may not be their best game, and that is okay."

Though the girls are doing excellent thus far, they are bound to reach some sort of challenge at some point in their season.

Burgess believes that this basketball season will hold for the varsity girls will be "competing in ev-

ery game and every circumstance at our fullest potential as well as competing against their own personal expectations."

This year, the team is most excited about getting to hang out and connect with each other on a personal, friendly level. "It's going to be a long season," Burgess states, "[so] they will have to enjoy being together for practices and games."

To her varsity girls as well as all of the other MHS basketball players, Burgess had these two simple words to say about the season: "Enjoy it."



The Blue and White Staff



Calendar of Events

Thursday
7-12 Music
Concert - 7:15 pm

Friday
JH Wrestling @
Sigourney - 4:15 pm
V BB vs Sigourney
Here - 6:00 pm

Saturday
V Wrestling @
Iowa Falls - 1:00 pm

Monday
JH Wrestling @
Sully - 4:15 pm

Tuesday
JH Girls BB vs
Sigourney: Here - 4:15 pm
JV/V BB Quad @
Keota - 6:00 pm

Wednesday
No Activities

Thursday
V Wrestling @
HLV - 5:00 pm
JV/V BB Quad vs
English Valleys:
Here - 6:00 pm