Change & Possibilities
by Diann McFerrin

I always expect changes at the beginning of the school year, but when I think back to the beginning of last year, working on the first newsletter, preparing for new classes, meeting new families, I did not anticipate the amount of changes I would encounter, both in my personal life and my professional life.

Over the last year my husband and I began a new business, started construction on an addition to our house, and to our delight, welcomed home a precious baby girl. And as wonderful as each of these things is – that is a lot of change. Change is hard. But change is also exciting. With change comes opportunity and growth.

At the beginning of the last school year I never imagined that the Mid-Prairie Home School Assistance Program would be in a new building. I felt settled in my little desk in classroom #3. But then, another change!

I think about this quotation from William Pollard, “Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement.” Our MPHSAP has an incredible new space and we now have the opportunity to be innovative and creative with it.

Already, parents have shared building ideas with us and made them a reality. We have an amazing new family lounge to replace the former staff lounge in the building. This room is made for families to have easy access to the gym, read together, spread out on the tables, or just enjoy some hot coffee and company. There’s talk of co-op gym days amongst some elementary school families. The Maker Room is full of tools and organized supplies that are here to inspire your students to problem solve and make something new. The new Mid-Prairie Home School Education Center is your building, and we get to make it our own!

This is my call out to our home schooling families: be innovative and creative with us! What ideas do you have? How can we improve our program and support our families? How would your family like to use the space? We have 9 full-sized classrooms, a beautiful media center, a gymnasium, a stage, playgrounds, a baseball diamond, even a kitchen! We have the space – let’s use it.

Now, at the beginning of this school year, as I write this first newsletter article, prepare for new classes, and plan meetings with new families, sitting in my new office, in a new building, I eagerly anticipate the change and possibilities that this year holds.

Click here to submit your ideas on how we can use our new space.
## Activities & Events Calendar

### September
- **8**  Nature Study Club
- **14**  Monarch Tagging & Bug Hunt
- **19**  LEGO Club at the Library
- **20**  Canoeing at Terry Trueblood Recreation Center
- **26**  Quad City Botanical Center
- **28**  Thursday Enrichment Classes Begin
- **29**  Friday Enrichment Classes Begin

### October
- **17-19** Iowa Assessments

## Online Sign ups

Don’t forget to **sign up for HSAP events by Friday, September 8th**, using the link below. Upon completion, you will receive a confirmation screen that will let you know we have received your registration. Be sure to add your events to your personal calendar as you sign up. You will find a link on our website as well as in the Friday Memo. [http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignups](http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignups).

Please remember that field trips with a fee must often be paid by the HSAP in advance. While we understand there are sometimes circumstances when you must cancel, note that you may still be charged the fee.

## Nature Study Club
**Friday, September 8th 1:30 p.m.**
**Parkside Park, Wellman**

Have you wanted to include more nature study in your home school program and would like to meet with some kindred spirits and find some encouragement? Our Nature Study Club will provide families with an opportunity to be outdoors with other families as we study nature together once per month. You will listen to a short presentation, do a walk/exploration with your children as you apply something from the presentation, and draw in nature notebooks. We will also have time for families to share with the group the explorations and nature drawings they have completed at home. If you already have nature notebooks and colored pencils, please bring them with you. We will also have clipboards, pencils, and paper available. We will meet at Parkside Park, 525 13th Street in Wellman. In the event of rain, our meeting will be held at the Mid-Prairie Home School Education Center.

## Monarch Tagging & Bug Hunt
**Thursday, September 14th 1:30 p.m. (Please arrive 15 minutes early)**
**Kent Park Education Center**
**Oxford, IA**

In this hands-on stewardship activity, students will learn about the amazing migration of monarch butterflies. Then they’ll head outside to help collect and tag monarchs, a practice used to track migration information across North America. Students will also be encouraged to collect other bugs and distinguish between bugs and insects. Come join the naturalists at Kent Park as we have a fun afternoon learning outside in the natural world.

## Physical Fitness Testing
**Friday, September 15th 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**
**MP Home School Education Center**

On Friday, September 15th, we will meet in the Mid-Prairie Home School Education Center gym for Physical Fitness Testing. This testing tracks your fitness level as you grow. The students will be allowed three attempts at each of the first four events. The mile walk/run will only be done once per age group. Awards will be handed out in May. All students will have their own fitness folders in which to keep their scores throughout the years and note their improvement.
HSAP Field Trips and Activities

LEGO Club at the Library
Tuesday, September 19th
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Kalona Public Library
The Kalona Library offers a Lego Club event to our HSAP students to take place each month on the third Tuesday from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. The students will be given a theme on which to build and then they will present their creations for the group at the end of the time. This allows for some educational opportunities in narrative skills, presentation skills, and active listening.

Canoeing at Terry Trueblood Recreation Center
Wednesday, September 20th
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Iowa City, IA
Have you ever canoed? Do you want to learn how? Then this is the field trip for you. Johnson County Conservation staff will provide a brief introduction to canoeing and then allow participants time to practice these skills on the open water. Safety will be stressed throughout the lesson, and all participants are required to wear a properly fitting PFD. Students will be supervised on the water by the conservation staff at all times, while parents watch from the shore. Students must be in at least 4th grade. This field trip has a maximum number of 15 student participants. So sign up asap!

Quad City Botanical Center
Tuesday, September 26th
10:00 a.m.
Rock Island, IL
Join us as we bring people and plants together in a meaningful way. We will be enjoying an interactive tour of the tropical Sun Garden, and using our senses to explore an exotic environment different from our own backyards. Students will also be learning about greenhouses and how they work. Each student will take a planted seed or plant home. Cost of this is $4 for ages 2-18 and $3 per adult attending. After the program, families are more than welcome to explore the rest of the botanical center on their own, and delve into some of their hands-on exhibits. Families are invited to bring a lunch to eat at the botanical center.

Iowa Assessments
Tuesday, October 17th to Thursday, October 19th
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
MP Home School Education Center
Iowa Assessments (Formerly ITBS and ITED) testing will take place in the mornings from October 17th through 19th. Testing is optional. Sign up by submitting the names and grade levels of students you want tested. If you want children in kindergarten through second grade tested, this must be done at home. The home tests must be completed by October 19th.

We will be administering the tests each morning at our Resource Center. Please sign up at http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignUps by Friday, September 8th. We will be sending out more detailed information and instructions for preparation a couple of weeks prior to the testing dates. We will not be able to support late sign ups. Please register now if you need your student to take the tests.

Important Testing Information

- High school students planning to receive a MPHSAP diploma must take the Iowa Assessments in their junior year. You must sign up NOW to get tests ordered in time for the October testing date.
- If your student is in the 7th grade this year and you are considering enrolling them in a high-school-level class next year, you must sign up for them to take the Iowa Assessments this month. As we enroll students for High-School-Level classes, each year we have 8th grade students request to enroll as well. While we encourage all our students to challenge themselves, and not feel like they must be identified by their “grade level,” we have decided that there must be objective standards to determine if students are ready and equipped to handle the rigor and academic challenges of the coursework. The following is the criteria for 8th grade students to take high school courses:
  1. They must score at the 80th percentile or higher on the seventh grade level Iowa Assessments.
  2. They must have completed all of the prerequisites of the course.
- If you know that your child has academic delays that you suspect are due to a certifiable learning disability and you still would like to see them tested, we do offer accommodations. Please indicate this when you sign up or talk to Jan Childress for more details.
  Note: We have limited options for providing accommodations. We can allow for extended time, but we cannot provide someone to read aloud for the student. If that is what is needed, the parent must be available to do that.
- Students attending Academies and other college-level classes, may need to be tested but it cannot be done during the scheduled times. Please sign up and tell us what circumstances need to be worked around. We will do our best to accommodate.
Enrichment Classes

It’s that time of year again! On this page are descriptions of the enrichment classes we will be offering for the fall session. These classes will be six weeks long, beginning Thursday, September 28th, and continuing until Friday, November 10th.

- Students will take two 1-hour classes with the first hour running from 10:00-11:00 a.m., and the second from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- There is also an opportunity to participate in a children’s choir on Thursdays from 12:30 - 1:15 p.m. and Friday mornings from 9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., for those interested.
- Due to Iowa Assessment testing, there will be no Enrichment Classes Thursday, October 19th, or Friday, October 20th.

Class space is limited, so please be sure to sign up online at http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignups by Friday, September 8th. Enrichment classes will be held in the Mid-Prairie Home School Education Center.

PARENTS: Check page 6 for information about the Parent Class on Fridays.

A note from the Li'lle's classes:
Even if your child is 4 years old, please be sure they are ready for Kindergarten level classes by evaluating that they can independently write their name and take care of all potty needs. While we will take a restroom break during class, your student should be completely independent in the restroom. Due to the popularity of these courses, priority will be given to the enrolled Kindergarten students before including the 4 year olds in the classes. Snack may be provided some days during class, please note at registration if your student has any food allergies we should be aware of.

Who Took Mr. Bear? (Grades 1-3)
The story of Mr. Bear and who borrowed him without asking is designed to help students study clues and come to a conclusion based on facts. This class will allow students to practice their observation skills as well as working in a small group. Various hands-on activities each week will keep students engaged and anticipating the next class time. There will also be some science included along the way as students try to determine what happened to Mr. Bear.

Under the Sea (Grades 1-3)
Have you ever had questions about the ocean and it’s inhabitants? Come join us as we learn all about what happens under the sea. We will be learning about unique ocean habitats and the exciting marine creatures that live in them. Hands-on activities, games, and crafts will be kept students engaged and fascinated each week. Science, reading, math and art activities will help us learn more about life under the sea!

Compass of Nature (Grades 4-6)
This class will focus on taking students outside every class to immerse them in the nature that we have around us at the school yard. Students will begin nature journals to be used during the 6-week enrichment course, but also be encouraged to start one of their own at home as part of their home school curriculum this year. Students will be given practice using multiple tools of observation that model a naturalist including the practice of phenology, noticing and keeping track of changes throughout the short time span of the course that will be ongoing afterwards.

Let’s have an ART adventure! (Grades 4-6)
In the 4-6th grade art enrichment class this year we will be exploring various artists, their work and their styles. We will be making works using copper panels, doing watercolor resist techniques, acrylic painting on canvas, some 3D work and more. Join us for learning about art and making your original pieces of artwork.

Music and Motion (Grades 4-6)
In this class, a part of our time each week will be spent in the music room and the other part will be in the gym. While in the music room, we’ll be learning to play the recorder. When we’re in the gym, we’ll be getting good exercise while having fun! In both areas, we’ll be emphasizing cooperative learning, character building, and much more. (There are a limited number of recorders available for check-out on a first-come/first-serve basis or you may bring your own.)

Children’s Choir (All ages)
We invite you to make music with the Enrichment Classes Children’s Choir which is open to preschoolers through 6th graders. The choir will meet on Thursday afternoons from 12:30-1:15 p.m. and Friday mornings from 9:15 - 10:00 a.m. Come and join us as we sing, dance and drum up some fun!

September 2017
High School Information

Should I take the SAT or the ACT?
This is a common question and unfortunately there isn’t an easy answer! Each test assesses different information and skills but most colleges will accept either exam scores for admissions. This link to the Iowa College Aid has some helpful considerations to make when deciding which exam to register for: https://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/content/should-you-take-act-or-sat

SAT Testing
If you are interested in having your student take the SAT, you can find information about dates, fees, etc. at http://sat.collegeboard.org/home

Don’t forget to take advantage of the free prep test available through Khan Academy to prepare for your exam! https://www.khanacademy.org/sat

ACT Testing

Many dates and sites have been established for any high school students who need to take the ACT’s this school year.

The multiple choice questions cover English, mathematics, reading, and science. The ACT takes 3 ½ hours. If your student chooses to take the optional writing test, then allow an extra ½ hour. For registration, prices, extra services available, locations and times, and what your student should bring, check out the website at http://www.actstudent.org/regist/

Below is a list of upcoming test dates and registration deadlines.

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<th>ACT Testing Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Test Date</td>
<td>Registration Deadline</td>
<td>Late Fee Required</td>
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<td>December 9, 2017</td>
<td>November 3, 2017</td>
<td>November 17, 2017</td>
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<td>February 10, 2018</td>
<td>January 12, 2018</td>
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<td>April 14, 2018</td>
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<td>June 9, 2018</td>
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Workplace Learning Connections
How would you like to try out a career before you even apply? Workplace Learning Connections offers Job Shadowing opportunities to high schoolers in grades 10, 11, & 12 and 60-hour Internship placements to students in grades 11 & 12. More information can be found at: www.workplace-learning.org. The application deadline for Job Shadows is due September 22nd. Internship applications will be due November 3rd. If you are interested in a Job Shadow or Internship placement this year please let Rachel Kerns know by visiting: http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignups.

High School Honors Program
Home schooling provides students the opportunity to drink deeply from many different subject areas, and to learn to incorporate learning from classes and textbooks into real-world, meaningful experiences. It is our expectation that students in our diploma program will finish with a very solid, well-rounded education, ready to take on whatever academic or life tasks they choose. Therefore, participation in the honors program requires more than just academic rigor and a strong educational foundation. Our goal for honors students is that they go above and beyond the high standards that we set for MPHSAH graduates, and reach for excellence.

We offer honors in three areas: Honors in Academics, Honors in Service, and Honors in Specific Subject Areas (music, art, science, construction, etc.). For more information on the specific programs, please contact your supervising teacher.

PSAT Testing
Students in their junior year of high school have the opportunity to sign up for the PSAT exam, which will be given at Mid-Prairie High School on Wednesday Morning, October 11th. Some strong students in grade 10, and occasionally 9th grade, elect to take the exam for practice. The PSAT is the qualifying exam for National Merit Scholarships. Almost every college and university in the nation grants substantial merit scholarships to students who have received top (greater than 99th percentile) scores on his exam.

The cost for taking the exam is $15. We will be emailing further details to those of you who have signed up as they become available. You can register for the PSAT by visiting: http://tinyurl.com/HSAPEventSignups

More info can be found at the following link: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html

Hey, have you heard about? Iowa College Access Network
For those students on the college track, the Iowa College Access Network is an amazing resource! The website features helpful timelines, guidance in career choices, and resources to help you plan your High School career. Tips are specific to Iowa students and include financial aid planning worksheets, month-by-month deadlines for admissions, and there are even scholarship lists to help you find more opportunities available in our state. The website is http://www.icansucceed.org/, check them out!

In addition to the online services, you can also schedule a free advising appointment with the Student Success Center. Our Mid-Prairie representative, Susan Dickenson, is happy to talk to you about career planning and financial aid. Her office is located at the Johnson County Kirkwood Regional Center in Coralville. Give her a call and schedule an appointment today! 319-423-7701.
Resources You’ll Love

GWAEKA Services
As part of the HSAP, you are given the same privileges as teachers in accessing the resources at the Grant Wood Area Education Agency. This means that you can go online to search through their libraries for educational materials – videos, books, book sets, curriculum, etc. This is a VERY large collection. AEA ONLINE RESEARCH DATABASES is another great service you have access to. It includes encyclopedias, educational magazines, software tutorials, and much more. This is an educational resource that is not available to the general public. EDUCATION CONSULTANTS are also available to answer questions and evaluate issues. This includes Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Consultants, etc. If you are interested in any of these services, please let your supervising teacher know, and she will guide you in how to access them.

Scholastic Book Clubs
We are pleased that our program will be participating in Scholastic Book Clubs this school year. The Book Club is full of just-right, affordable books and Storia eBooks for every age and reading level. We will only be participating in online ordering. You will need to register on the Scholastic website and pay online. We will notify you when the books have arrived for you to pick up. Please have your orders submitted by September 28.

Ordering online is fast and easy:
REGISTER at https://orders.scholastic.com/L4DM6
ENTER the Class Activation Code L4DM6
CHOOSE from thousands of print titles, value packs, and Storia eBooks
SUBMIT the order online

Please contact Rachel Kerns (rkerns@mphawks.org) with any questions.

Barnes and Noble Educator Discount
Barnes and Noble offers a 20% discount of purchases made for school use. We will submit an enrollment list to them, but it may be helpful to have with you a copy of your Enrollment/Agreement Contract as documentation of your family home schooling. They will issue you an educator’s discount card after the first visit, and from then on, you will only need to show the card to receive the discount.

Future Problem Solvers
Need an academic challenge for your son or daughter? Consider Future Problem Solving.

- Future Problem Solving is an international academic competition for students in grades four through twelve.
- Students work together in teams of four.
- The skills learned and practiced in Future Problem Solving include:
  - Researching a topic from various viewpoints
  - Using teamwork
  - Communicating orally and in written form analyzing futuristic scenarios
  - Determining the most significant problem
  - Brainstorming possible solutions
  - Choosing criteria
  - Evaluating solution ideas
  - Describing the best solution as a plan of action
  - Acting the team action plan
- Students have an opportunity to compete locally, statewide, and internationally and study topics such as Propaganda, Trade Barriers, Pharmaceuticals, Water Quality, Space, Robotics, Transportation, Processed Foods, and Megacities.

- Future Problem Solving participants meet weekly from September to February. Some teams qualify for the State Bowl held in April, and state champions represent Iowa at the International Competition.
- Former home school mom Paula Lawson-Moore, who has coached for thirty years, will continue to direct FPS sessions in both Iowa City and Kalona. Please contact Paula at fpscoach@hotmail.com with questions.

Have a Voice? Come Sing With Us!

Elementary/Middle School Choir (Monday, 11:45 a.m. -12:30 p.m.)
High School Choir (Monday, 3:20-4:30 p.m.)

There is still time to sign up to participate in our Monday HSAP choirs. The elementary/middle school choir which meets from 11:45 a.m. -12:30 p.m. is open to K-8th graders. We would love to have you join us as we sing, dance and drum up all kinds of fun. The high school choir is open to 7th -12th graders and will be meeting from 3:20-4:30 p.m. We will do at least two performances this year, one in December and one in May. Other community performances may also be scheduled. Questions: Contact Sheila Raim (sraim@mphawks.org).

Parent Class

During Friday enrichment classes, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., parents are invited to participate in our parent class. This year we will be focusing on self-care and what that looks like! We will be covering topics such as doing things that energize us, our morning routines, bringing out our creative sides, getting dressed for a great day, healthy eating and exercise, eliminating clutter, making time for our spouses and friends, and more! We’ll also discuss menu planning, freezer cooking and recipe ideas to make life easier.

September 2017
We are so thankful for those who came in this summer and volunteered their time to help us settle into our new building. From organizing and shelving library materials to designing and creating the parent lounge, we can’t say thank you enough to these ladies: Kristen Peiffer, Cande Helmuth, Vivian Baumhover, Pam Brase, and Lisa Tomash.