



# Knight Times

## NHS Welcomes New Assistant Principal, Mr. Stacy

Recently, Northeastern High School gained a new assistant principal, Mr. Bob Stacy. We asked Mr. Stacy a few questions so that all of us here at NHS could get to know him a little better. As he tells us, "I am from a small town of about 900 in northern Indiana. I graduated from Fairfield High School near Goshen with about 90 students in 1990. I earned my Bachelor degree in Secondary Social Studies Education at Ball State University, where I met my wife. I taught for 3 years at Blue River Valley HS, before moving to Wes-Del HS for 17 1/2 years. At Wes-Del, I taught US History, Government, and Topics in History."

"My first impressions of Northeastern are that we have a lot of great students, with a great many talents. The school size is actually the largest of any of the schools that I have attended or worked in, which allows us to offer a lot of great opportunities for students to show off those talents in academics, extracurricular, and athletics." We asked about his philosophy regarding education, and his response was an interesting and thoughtful one: 'I have always admired the following quote from Ghandi: 'Live as if you were going to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live

forever.' Learning is a life-long process, and no one is ever too young or too old to learn."

Any transition to a new position is a challenging one, and coming to a new school is no different. Even teachers and administrators have lives outside of school, with interests that gives balance to their life. In those times, Mr. Stacy enjoys traveling with his wife, cycling, reading, and golf. We asked what he would like to see or do now that he is a member of the NHS family, and he responded, "My goal as a member of the Northeastern family is to continue on the long standing tradition of producing the next generation of doctors, lawyers, electricians, mechanics, or any profession that students choose to pursue when they leave the hallways of Northeastern High School."

Let's help make Mr. Stacy welcome here, and show him how the Knights can be a great group for him to help lead.



## Why ISTEP?

The word ISTEP elicits reactions ranging from fear to stress and frustration for those involved: students and teachers, even parents. It is difficult to explain this critical requirement forced upon every school and student in certain grades, every year, but the results of this test have major consequences for all parties connected to it. So what is it, and why do you have to take it?

ISTEP is the acronym for Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress. According to the Indiana Department of Education, students must demonstrate mastery in the English and math state standards as a requirement for graduation. The original testing dates back to 1988, beginning under Governor Orr's administration. What was once used as a measure to determine whether a student needed remediation has become an indicator of how well schools are doing and is often tied to teacher pay. This came as a result of school reform and increased accountability. Subsequent years saw a monumental increase in testing as a direct result of a federal law called "No Child Left Behind." While the testing methods were fairly consistent over many years, changes in laws extended testing, and the tests began to undergo changes. This is where controversy over ISTEP begins.

Indiana students have, in the last several years, seen changes in tests used, changes in standards to be met, and changes in federal

law that directly influences this testing. "No Child Left Behind" has evolved into the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA), which still requires accountability but gives states more flexibility. For several years, 10<sup>th</sup> graders (in English) and 9<sup>th</sup> graders (typically in algebra and biology) took the "Graduation Qualifying Exam" (or GQE). Then this was replaced with ECA ("End of Course Assessment"). Due to political pressure, Indiana standards were changed and ISTEP became the go-to test again. However, after a terrible testing session statewide, public pressure caused Indiana politicians to plan replacement of this test yet again with an assessment currently referred to as "I-LEARN." Yet another test continues a problem already: many changes in both tests and standards gives no clear picture of student progress because a valid year-to-year comparison can't be made due to alterations in the source of the data. Despite this lack of consistent data, these tests are still used for school accountability.

And the reality is this testing is expensive - according to *The Indianapolis Star*, the General Assembly of Indiana has "appropriated over \$800 million for testing and remediation since 1987." This includes other state-mandated testing aside from ISTEP. Another \$300 million has been spent by the state in administering standardized tests since 2002.

Those of you scheduled to begin testing next week? You still need to take it and do your best. Regardless of politics and data - this test matters. To all of us.

*(For pre-test suggestions, see page 6)*

## Knights Basketball - February Wrap-Up

### Lady Knights Basketball -

The Lady Knights saw their season come to an end in the championship game of the IHSAA 2A #41 sectional against Winchester, with a final score of 65-41. Northeastern was proud to host the sectional, but was disappointed that the Lady Knights were unable to prevail against Winchester.

Coach Darnell summed it all up: "I'm proud of how strong we finished season. We came together and played well as a team making it to the sectional championship. We have built a strong foundation for our future and are excited for next season."

Overall, this team grew this season, and NHS is hopeful they will be even stronger next year as this group continues to get better and better.



### Boys Basketball -

Both the varsity and the JV teams defeated Union City on Wednesday following a hard-fought against 4A Connersville High School the previous night. In fact, the Knights lost by only 7 points to Connersville - in a hot, crowded gym filled to capacity with passionate fans from both sides.

It was just the Friday before, February 17th, that the Knights won their 4th consecutive TEC title following a win over Winchester on the Knights home court, with a final score of 75-59. In fact, the Knights, whose standings are 18-4, 6-0 in conference, had 28 straight wins in conference play and 43 wins in a row over "league foes" (as the local paper worded it!).

The Knights will enter the sectional in a very good position to bring home a sectional win!



The IHSAA Class 2A Sectional 41, to be played at Hagerstown, begins on February 28th. The Knights won't see play until game 4, when they go against the winner of game 2, at 7:30 p.m. March 3rd. The championship game - in which the Knights have a great chance to be playing - will be 7:30 March 4th.

## Good News -

## Teacher of the Month, January

### Junior Nick Stanley

Qualified for the state when competing in the SkillsUSA Indiana Region 3 firefighting competition. He will participate in the state SkillsUSA, which will be held at the state fairgrounds in Indianapolis on April 21 and 22. What is most incredible is that Nick accomplished this while battling mononucleosis - this illustrates the determination Nick possesses, and we all wish him continued success at the state level.



Art teacher Ms. Zimmerman was chosen as the teacher of the month for January, and it was much deserved. She has been able to inspire and motivate students in art that often have difficulty finding success in other subjects. This saves students! One look at her students' work (as well as her own) illustrates Ms. Zimmerman's success.



### Student of the Month!!!

Miko Thompson is one of those students who is always positive and enthusiastic, and just a great young guy to have in a classroom. He is very deserving of being the student of the month for February, after being nominated by the Science Department.

Miko, however, said that he doesn't remember when he has had his picture taken so many times.



## The NHS Greenhouse Is Ready to Bloom

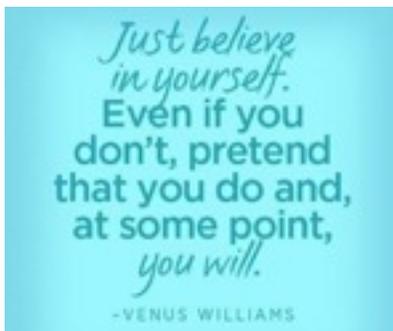
The NHS greenhouse has been in the works for a long, long time. It is - at last - truly green, and filling with thriving plants. Junior Jessica Estes noted how important it is to know how to plant - and how surprised she was that many students didn't know how to do this. She said they have learned valuable lessons in fertilizing, too - too much can be destructive and too little won't help a plant grow. This has been a great educational opportunity for NHS students.

Some plants in the greenhouse were started with propagating plants that had been donated. Others are ordered and are coming in regularly. This past week, tomato plants (Beefmaster and Big Boy varieties) were transplanted. They also have several colors of geraniums growing, and hanging baskets, too. The plan is for flats to be ready in May, in time for gardens to be put out. In fact, Opening Day for the greenhouse is planned for May 3rd, from 5 to 8 p.m. A final thought - this is an easy way to grab a Mother's Day gift, too, without leaving school.



## How to prepare yourself for ISTEP this coming week -

- \* Get a good night's rest!
- \* Have breakfast
- \* Make sure you wear something comfortable - or if you feel you have some lucky article of clothing, wear it. This helps put your head in the game!
- \* Take deep breaths if you feel anxiety
- \* Take your time - don't rush - and remind yourself this is what you have been preparing for.
- \* As long as you have time available - double-check your work! You might catch something you missed.
- \* Some questions have more than one question within them - make sure you answer all!
- \* For written responses, make sure you restate the question in some manner, use key words from the prompt, and take the time to fully respond, usually in several paragraphs at least.
- \* Most of all - believe in yourself!! YOU GOT THIS!!



### Scenes from the win over Lincoln:



## Teacher of the Month, February



Math teacher Mr. Chad Wilson was chosen as the teacher of the month for February, as a result of both his engagement with crucial activities here at NHS and his teaching of math that genuinely helps students learn. In fact, as he recently heard, if student work is "Chad-checked," then they know they have a skill mastered! That is a compliment!

### Scenes from the pep session:

