

# Conestoga Public Schools

## Townhall

### INFORMATION ON PROPOSED BOND PROJECT

**SUPERINTENDENT, DR. BETH JOHNSEN**

On or before May 11, 2021, Conestoga patrons will be asked to vote on the proposed improvements at the Elementary Building & Jr. Sr. High Building. If your primary residence is within the Conestoga School district, you are eligible to vote on the proposal. The Cass County Election Commissioner will be sending voter ballots in the mail to your household.

Voter Information		Mail-in Ballot Information	
April 23, 2021 (post marked date)	Voter Registration Deadline (including Mail-in registration)	April 19, 2021	Ballots mailed out to All Conestoga patrons in Cass & Otoe counties
Cass County Election site-link to check on your voting status: <a href="https://www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov/voterview">https://www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov/voterview</a>		May 11, 2021 (by 5PM)	All ballots must be @ the Cass County Election Office

The chart shows the total amount of tax levy for each school year. The history of Conestoga's finances are influenced by past building bonds, legislation, State Aid, & educational needs. This current 2020-21 year; the district did not levy for bonds. All building bonds are paid off, which has lowered the total levy, if compared to previous years. The proposed bond levy, using this year's 2020 taxable valuation amount, would be 18.25 cents. The future total levies are approximate amounts using our current budgeting practice of \$.95 for the General Fund levy and adding the 18.25 cents. The estimated \$1.13 total levy for future years are comparable to past taxes levied by the district.

30 years of Conestoga Tax Levy History					
1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
\$1.4651	\$1.4202	\$1.3930	\$1.5901	\$1.4261	\$1.3890
1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
\$1.3359	\$1.1795	\$2.0516	\$1.2331	\$1.2688	\$1.2988
2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
\$1.3103	\$1.3178	\$1.3761	\$1.3027	\$1.3310	\$1.1540
2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
\$1.2990	\$1.3064	\$1.2373	\$1.2236	\$1.2311	\$1.2189
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
\$1.0990	\$1.0790	\$1.1266	\$1.1208	\$1.1738	\$1.0844
2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
\$1.1325	\$1.1325	\$1.1325	\$1.1325	\$1.1325	\$1.1325

THE PROPOSED BOND AMOUNT IS \$33,610,000 FOR A 25 YEAR BOND TERM.

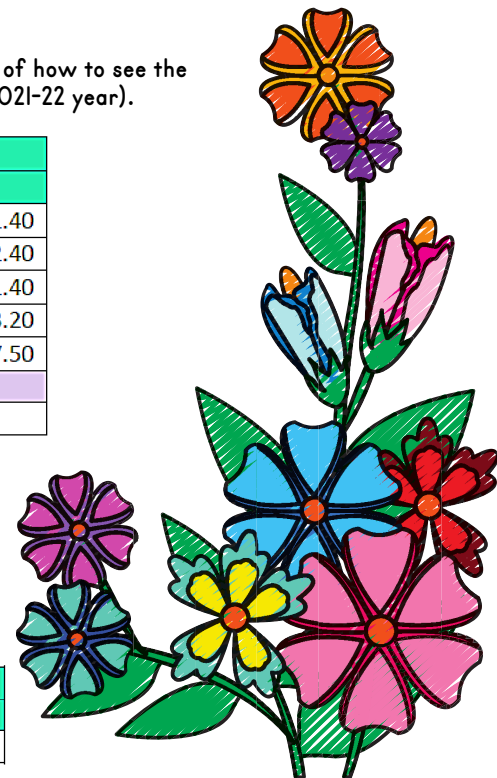
In a previous flyer, an overview of the estimation process was shared. Here's another example of how to see the approximate cost to the patron taxpayer (example: \$100,000 X .013250 = \$1,325.00 for the 2021-22 year).

Fiscal Year	Total Levy	Property Valuation		
		\$ 100,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
2017-18	\$1.1738	\$1,173.80	\$2,347.60	\$3,521.40
2018-19	\$1.1208	\$1,120.80	\$2,241.60	\$3,362.40
2019-20	\$1.1738	\$1,173.80	\$2,347.60	\$3,521.40
2020-21	\$1.0844	\$1,084.40	\$2,168.80	\$3,253.20
2021-22	\$1.1325	\$1,132.50	\$2,265.00	\$3,397.50
1 acre of irrigated farm land		1 acre of dry farmland	1 acre of pasture farm land	
\$9.57		\$8.24	\$3.01	

With the projected future levy increase of \$0.1825 per \$100 of property valuation for the bond and a \$0.1344 per \$100 of property valuation reduction in the building fund, there will only be a \$0.0481 total increase in the school levy.

Below you can see the proposed net increase in taxes.  
(Property Valuation X .000481 = Net Increase)

Fiscal Year	Net Levy Increase	Net Increase from FY 20-21 to 21-22 per Property Valuation		
		\$ 100,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
2021-22	\$0.0481	\$48.10	\$96.20	\$144.30



## WHAT IS A SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVY

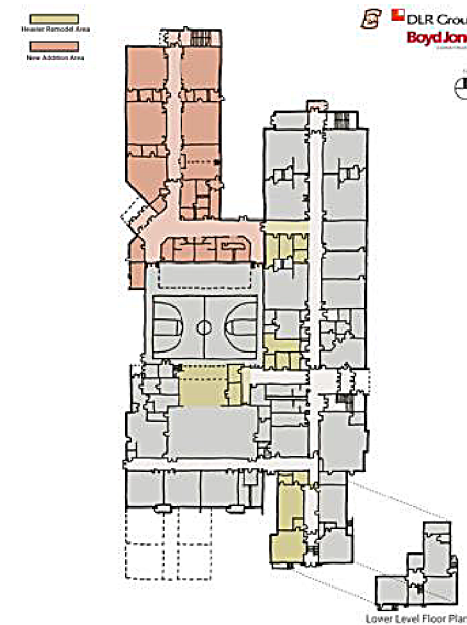
The school districts use taxes to balance its budget along with Federal and State funding. The amount of the levy is determined by the needs of the school. The largest part of the levy is called the General Fund; which pays for all staff salaries and benefits, curriculum materials, building/utilities/maintenance, and all other monthly bills. A Special Buildings Fund can also be collected to grow a building renovation & improvement project, like a roof replacement. The Bond Fund levies or collects funds to pay off a bond note. Adding the 3 funds together creates the total levy that the school district uses to maintain the educational environment and needs of the students.

Levy Comparison Averages	
Past 10-year levy average	Past 30-year levy average
\$1.1595	\$1.3014

Reflections of past levy averages reveal that the last 10 year's average of \$1.1595 is considerably lower than the 30 year's average of \$1.3014. The Board of Education works to ensure an outstanding education for the kids of Conestoga and also stewards the funding of levies wisely. The proposed Building Bond Fund and the General Fund total levy is estimated to be \$1.1325. The Board of Education may also consider adding a few cents for the Special Building Fund to buildup funds for future repairs and maintenance. This could bring the total levy to be near the 10-year average

### Footprint Proposals for Building Location Includes:

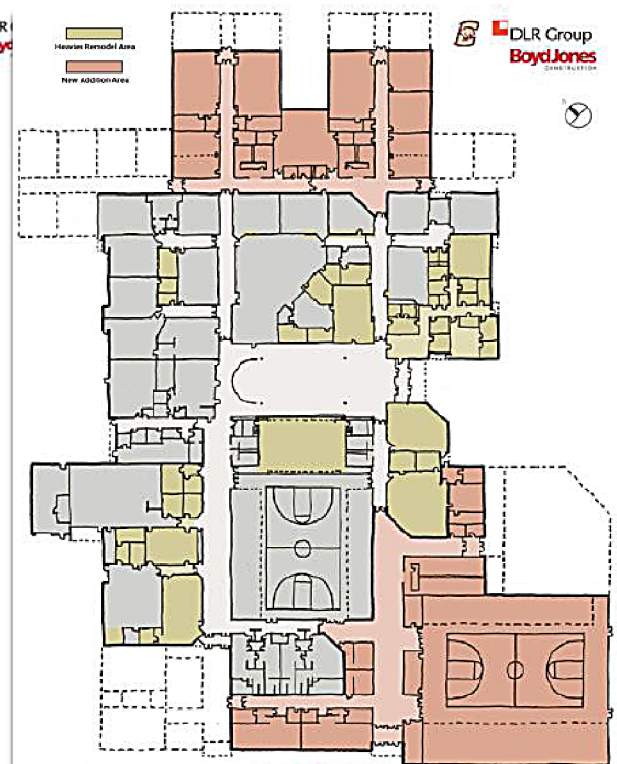
Elementary School Building				Jr. Sr. High School Building				
14 additional/renovated classrooms	4 SpED classrooms	Additional restrooms & mothers' room	Concessions & team rooms	14 additional/renovated classrooms	Additional restrooms & mothers' room	Competition-size gym	Additional & renovated lockerrooms	Concessions & lobby
Activities entrance w/security	Expanded cafeteria	Staff meeting/Flex rooms	Music classroom	4 SpED classrooms	Expanded cafeteria & Commona	Coordinators' offices	Additional Fine-Arts classrooms	CTE Renovated rooms
Daycare renovation	Coordinators' offices	Playground hard-surfacing	Security enhancements	Technology enhancement & rooms	Staff meeting/Flex rooms	Security enhancements & entrances	Required storm shelters	Additional Storage
Required storm shelters	Mechanical rooms	Additional storage		Relocated front offices w/ security entrance	New HVAC system	Mechanical rooms	Parking-lot renovations	Entrance driveway expansion



Elementary School - Concept Floor Plan, Main Level



Elementary School - Concept Floor Plan, Upper Level



Junior/Senior High School - Concept Floor Plan

## OPEN HOUSE TOURS OF THE ELEMENTARY BUILDING & JR. SR. HIGH SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Come check out the schoolhouses and walkthrough the buildings on April 15, 2021, or April 28, 2021 at 5-7PM. Conestoga would like patrons and families to have opportunities to see the campuses, since Nebraska Health protocols and safety procedures are allowing people to be in buildings at the 100% capacity. If you plan to visit the buildings, we will require face-masking and social distancing! See you there!

Elementary School building location: 104 E. High Street Murray, NE April 15th & April 28th @ 5-7PM  
Jr. Sr. High School building location: 8404 42nd Street Murray, NE April 15th & April 28th @ 5-7PM

## A NOTE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

MR. ERIC DENNIS

This school year has delt the staff and students many challenges and opportunities. The challenges brought forth by the pandemic has led to one of the biggest opportunities, the increase usage of technology in the classroom. The impact of technology this year has affected student learning more than ever before.

Today it is common to walk into a classroom and see technology being implemented into the daily instruction. The teachers are utilizing technology for projects, group work, individual assessments, and to reinforce skills previously taught. Our new science and math programs have technology incorporated throughout the daily lessons and includes material for extended learning and reteaching opportunities. With the programs being online, the students are also able to access their textbooks online while at home, and other family resources as well



While technology can or may be used as a reward, or break, to play some educational games; the majority of the technology usage is strictly for instructional purposes. At the beginning of the year, having to teach online and in-person learners increased, and improved, the use of technology and how the technology is weaved throughout every grade level.

The teachers have done an outstanding job at finding ways to implement technology in all subject areas. As the year is coming to a close, we are continuing to find new ways to infuse technology into our instruction practices, which will bring forth a new ideas and practices for the year to come.



## A NOTE FROM THE JR./SR. HIGH PRINCIPAL

MR. ROB GEISE

The 2020-2021 school year is quickly coming to a close. I couldn't be prouder of the students and staff on how they approached the year, embraced change, persevered through adversity and how they worked to get better every day. We have a special group of students, staff and parents at Conestoga Schools.

The students competed in activities (both virtually and live) and did an excellent job of adapting to the procedures and protocols that were put in place to keep us all safe. Normalcy was difficult with a small percentage of their classmates attending class virtually, everybody wearing masks, changes to passing periods, losing a homecoming dance, changes to lunch, etc. However, they persevered and we're ending the year with "some" normalcy. All students are back in the building and like other schools, we're moving forward with Prom and Graduation. Graduation is set for May 8th with a 2:00 pm start. Our seniors have lost enough, so we're holding graduation in the high school gym to ensure there are no last-minute changes for our seniors and families. Safety precautions will still be in place, but we're excited for our kids to have a safe and successful end to the school year.

Our teachers couldn't have been more awesome. They adapted and persevered to provide our students with the best. The teachers had no choice but to grow and learn at a pace most would think impossible. However, we're all better for it – especially our students! They attended conferences, attended morning PLC's and collaborated as a group to improve technology skills as well as instruction. In addition, we progressed with implementation of various interventions to help our students and with moving to a block schedule this year, we are moving towards a hybrid schedule in 2021-2022 that will provide a mix between our traditional eight period day and our current 4 period block. We're excited to see how these changes benefit our students!

To say it was a year to remember is an understatement, but the perseverance shown by students and staff along with the steps they took to better the school and keep us safe will be what I remember most. Conestoga Jr/Sr High School is on the rise!

## A NOTE FROM THE NEW DAYCARE DIRECTOR

MRS. JOYCE BEGEMANN

Hello, Conestoga Families! I am so excited to begin working as the new director of the Conestoga Early Learning Center. We are very grateful for the years of care that Happy Hearts Daycare has given to our children. May 21st will be the last day for Happy Hearts Daycare and May 24th will be the official first day of the Conestoga Early Learning Center. I will be sending out specific information to enrolled families about our future Conestoga Daycare Program. Please rest assured that we will continue to provide care for all currently enrolled children and will honor the current wait-list. We will be providing care throughout the summer as well.

I can't wait to get to know each Conestoga Cougar Cub! Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns.  
jbegemann@conestogacougars.org





## ELEM INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

**MRS. TONKIN**

This month, I have teamed up with the elementary art teacher, Mr. Nolde, to create an opportunity for family involvement through a school-wide art project. All students at the elementary received a cougar paw to bring home. Families are encouraged to decorate, paint, color, etc. their paw. After the paws have been returned to school, they will be put together in a collective art display in the elementary cafeteria. This display will be up for the 4-6 music program and basket auction on April 28th, so make sure to check it out if you are planning to attend. Mr. Nolde and I feel this is great opportunity for families to connect to school in year that hasn't allowed us to come together as much as in years past.

## BIRTH TO 3 EARLY INTERVENTION

**MRS. AMY & MRS. SAM**

Conestoga offers home based early intervention services to children and their families who reside in the school district. Children are referred to the district for testing through their pediatrician or by contacting the district for an evaluation. The child is then evaluated in the area of concern and it is determined if they meet eligibility requirements for early intervention special education services. If a child meets the requirements, the services available may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy and early childhood special education services. If you have questions, or would like to refer your birth to age three child for an evaluation, please contact Amy Macrander, [amacrander@conestogacougars.org](mailto:amacrander@conestogacougars.org) OR at 402-235-2341.

### Conestoga Preschool

Conestoga offers FREE preschool to children residing within Conestoga School District. Children are eligible for 2 years of preschool if they attend both age eligible years. Children must turn 3 by July 31st of the current school year, for their first year of eligibility and must not be kindergarten age. If a child turns 5 by July 31st of the upcoming school year they are not able to attend Conestoga preschool. Priority when placing students in preschool is given to children who have special needs or are 4-years-old by July 31st.

Preschool applications are available for the 2021-2022 school year in the elementary front office. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Amy Macrander, [amacrander@conestogacougars.org](mailto:amacrander@conestogacougars.org); or Samantha Tanner, [stanner@conestogacougars.org](mailto:stanner@conestogacougars.org), OR at 402-235-2341.

## THIRD GRADE TEACHER

**MRS. WILLIAMS**

Getting kids to enjoy reading is something that Dr. Seuss was passionate about! It is something that Conestoga Elementary Staff is passionate about too! Dr. Seuss inspired kids to be creative, curious, and thoughtful as they learn about the world around them. On March 1st-3rd, the students did just that by engaging in a variety of activities to celebrate literacy!

Tips to foster a love of reading in your kids:

- \*Bring out your inner actor.
- \*Encourage interaction.
- \*Talk about books.
- \*Encourage reading outside of books.
- \*Introduce your childhood favorites.
- \*Take field trips to the library.



## FROM THE ELEMENTARY MUSIC ROOM

**MS. BAIR**

The 4-6th grades will be presenting a spring concert on Wednesday, April 28th at 7:00 pm in the elementary gym.

Families are invited to attend without limits. Social distancing will be encouraged between family groups and masks will be required for all audience members.

Please plan to join us for an evening of fun, toe tapping music!





## **ELEMENTARY P.E.**

### **MRS. HARVEY**

Physical Education has looked a little different this year due to masks. We used every opportunity this fall to be outside, playing games where we could be apart from each other. Throughout the winter we had to move inside due to the cold. However, we took a week and went outside to play in the snow. Students were allowed to bring their sleds from home, and we spent the week utilizing the wonderful outdoor facilities available to us at the elementary. Students were able to sled down the short hill on the south end of the soccer field, and then we used the large hill at the north side of the soccer field as well. This allowed students to work on sharing of equipment, playing in a different environment, for some of them conquering a fear, and also to understand that even when you think you are just playing and having fun you are getting in a lot of physical activity. We were so grateful that the weather cooperated and we were able to have a large amount of snow, and warm enough weather to be out and enjoy our time sledding. Throughout the remainder of the school year we will be outside whenever the weather is agreeable, and are looking forward to having a modified field day over the last two full days of school. We are so glad we are going to be able to have a field day, and are grateful to the PTO and many parents who have already made donations for the snack for the day.



## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, MRS. WRIGHT**

Every school district in Nebraska is required to participate in a monitoring process with the Nebraska Department of Education to ensure compliance with State and Federal Special Education guidelines. During the 2021-2022 school year, Conestoga will be participating in this process.

Monitoring priority areas that the State will be reviewing include;

- 1) Provision of a free appropriate public education in the in the least restrictive environment including compliance with the requirements of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
- 2) Procedural Safeguards for parents;
- 3) General supervision including: Child Find, which is the evaluation and identification of children and youth with disabilities and Transition for students 18-21, who based on their IEP, are identified as needing functional and vocational skill instruction; and
- 4) Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services, to the extent the representation is the result of inappropriate identification.

After the State has reviewed these areas as well as completes a file review and a review of special education policies and procedures, the State will issue a finding of compliance. If we are found to be out of compliance in an area, we will develop a corrective action plan to remedy any concerns that were found.

If you would like additional information about the special education monitoring process, please email Amanda Wright at [awright@conestogacougars.org](mailto:awright@conestogacougars.org)

## **IF NOT NOW THEN “WHEN”**

### **JR./SR. INSTRUCTIONAL COACH, MS. LEWIS**

This spring, a group of teachers have kicked off the fourth quarter and nice weather by participating in a book study for the title, “WHEN: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing” by Daniel Pink. The group will recognize the influence that timing plays in the roles of our classroom and personal lives. Throughout the study, we will appreciate the impacts that classroom approaches, students’ perceptions, biological clocks, and research plays on learning, living, working, and succeeding in the past, present and future.

Not only do we have a book study lined up for our professional development, but planning for the 2021-2022 school year is in the work to continue focus on small group work, complex texts, and the benefits and continual development of block scheduling for our student body.

# END OF THE YEAR REMINDERS

## DISTRICT NURSE, MRS. TRACY, RN

We have almost made it through a successful school year despite the obstacles this pandemic put in our way! Thank you to all parents and students that worked hard to protect our Conestoga student body, staff, and community during this pandemic. Your cooperation and diligence in following the COVID guidelines helped ensure we were able to stay in school learning and participating in school activities this 2020-2021 school year. It is great to be a COUGAR!

That being said, some of our requirements for returning to school in the fall will look a little more "normal" this year. Well child checks, physicals, and immunizations will be necessary and audited as they were in years past.

### Well Child Checks Physicals and Immunizations

- All students entering Kindergarten are REQUIRED to be up to date on immunizations and need to have physicals within 6 months of starting school.
- Yearly well child checks are strongly encouraged for all students.
- Every student athlete is REQUIRED to have a current up to date sports physical on file at school. Sports physicals are required each year for students that participate in athletics. Physicals that are not up to date for the 2021-2022 school year will not be accepted.
- Students entering 7th grade in the 2021-2022 school year are required to have a Tdap booster and physical
- ALL students entering 9th grade are required to have a physical.

### Medications

- If you have a student that takes medications at school, or have brought any medications into school. Please arrange for them to be picked up by a parent or guardian at the end of the school year. Medications will NOT be sent home with students NO EXCEPTIONS. Any meds left over after the last day of school will be disposed of and will not be kept over for the following school year.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. Have a fun, safe, and happy summer. Stay well!

tandersen@conestogacougars.org or 402-235-2271

## CURRICULUM CORNER

### DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT, MRS. BERGMAYER

I would like to thank the community for participating in some recent surveys from the Nebraska Department of Education which focused on the strengths and areas of growth for our schools. The next few newsletters will focus on questions and discussion based off the surveys. This newsletter will focus on sharing the grading systems at Conestoga.

#### Percentage Based (traditional A,B,C,D,F):

- Percentage based grading is currently utilized by 5th grade through 12th grade
- Traditional grading system that averages a student's whole learning over a set amount of time.
- Through this system a GPA is able to be determined and gives us a set number to determine grade level learning throughout the quarter
- Final grade given at the end of each quarter

#### Standards Referenced Grading:

- Also heard standards based grading is utilized by grades Kindergarten through 4th grade.
- Allows teachers, students, and families to view how the student is progressing through the year
- Determines mastery of a specific standard instead of an average of their learning.
- What does a "P" mean on your child's paper? You could consider this the equivalent of seeing an "A" on a traditional paper.
- A benefit of standards grading to your child is that if your child did not score well on their first few assignments, as they were just learning the content, it will not be reflected in their final score.
- Proficient means they truly are proficient with the standard at that moment in time

#### Why two different systems?

The elementary has been transitioning to this system for quite some time. The standards referenced system allows teachers within a grade level to drill down to identifying specific areas in which to teach students. This system allows students to be grouped and instructed by areas of similar need. It also allows students the opportunity to quickly review a concept if needed before beginning a lesson or even skip a concept due to their performance. Both systems have their benefits and purpose.

If you would like further information into the why behind our grading please reach out!

Feel free to watch this video further explaining the process.



## JR./SR. HIGH SCIENCE TEACHER

### MR. HUSKEY

For those that might be interested, I will be retiring from teaching in May 2021. It has been a wonderful 44 years of educational service for me, of which 32 years I spent here at Conestoga. I feel the time is right to leave my profession at this time with the work in place, the progress we have made, and very qualified teachers taking my place. I will definitely miss a lot of things about teaching, but the students are definitely at the top of the list. Conestoga has progressed over the years and students are very respectful, eager to learn, and always full of enthusiasm for school, sports, activities, and just school in general. I have been so fortunate to have experienced so many very fantastic days, months and years here at Conestoga.

I thank my fellow teachers for their "team" attitude and willingness to try new things and grow as individuals and as a faculty. Yes, we are a faculty, not a staff. Trained to teach, educated with degrees that required many years of study, and always improving ourselves each year professionally.

I thank administrators and board members for their guidance and willingness to listen to new ideas, try them, keep them if they succeed, or try something else if they fail. Now, as a grandpa I will spend my time watching my grandchildren grow, play, and succeed in their lives. A few trips to places I have never been with my retired foreign language teacher spouse are definitely in the future as well.

Thank you all and I wish nothing but the best for Conestoga always.



## 2021 QUIZ BOWL

MS. LEWIS

Despite Covid, our high school quiz bowl team was still able to participate in the Capitol Conference and BIO3 Radio Quiz Bowl Competitions. On March 16, Johnny, Tobias, Dezmond, Lindee, and Mati competed at Logan View in a double-elimination conference tournament. Despite having many correct answers, the team fell before the placing rounds.

Our BIO3 Radio Quiz Bowl squad has been competing on air on Thursday mornings since February. This team consisted of Keaghon, Daniel, and Dezmond. These boys made it to the Elite 8 in the completion before falling to Falls City on March 26th. The boys took their final competition into FOUR overtimes. Congrats to all of our great quiz bowl members, and their dedication to our junior high program by reading and scoring at our local Cass County Junior High Quiz Bowl events.



# QUIZ



## JOURNALISM

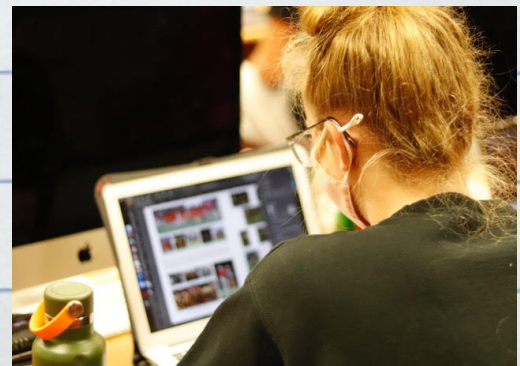
WRITTEN BY: STUDENT MAKENZIE JONES

This year, Conestoga students have taken advantage of their journalism class as a way to let their creativity flow. Journalism class was split into two sections this year, Journalism I and Journalism II. The split has allowed students to pursue different paths as they learn the ins and outs of media and the press. Journalism I students work together to create stories that are published on their new online newspaper, The Prowl. Journalism II students focus their class time on creating the school's yearbook, and also have done a great job capturing and sharing photos from Conestoga events. These pictures can be viewed and purchased at [www.theprowl.pixieset.com](http://www.theprowl.pixieset.com). All proceeds are invested into the purchase of new equipment for the journalism program.

So far, the journalism classes have been a hit with students and have become a bright spot in their days. "Journalism is definitely my favorite class. I love being able to be creative and to do something new every day. I can say that it is the only class that I get excited about going to consistently," said sophomore Emory Trofholz.

Along with the new changes, many new opportunities have become available to CHS students. Foremost is the NSAA State Journalism competition that students have entered to compete in in April. The journalism program, with the help of media production and digital design classes, submitted 69 entries to this year's competition out of a possible 73. The top eight submissions in each category are awarded state medals, and the top two teams earn team trophies. In some categories, students compete on-site in Norfolk for their chance to win a state championship. "I am super excited for state journalism. I know our team works really hard, and it would be nice if we were selected to compete in the in-person competition," said sophomore, Makenzie Jones. State Journalism participants will be selected in early April.

To see the journalism students' work, check out The Prowl at [www.chsprowl.org](http://www.chsprowl.org).



Journalism II student Emory Trofholz creates a spread for the 2021 yearbook.



## 7TH GRADE- ENGLISH AND READING

JH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER, MRS. IVERSON

### ENGLISH:

After Christmas break, each week students are asked to fill out a google form about what they appreciate about their classmates. Every student will have their own google doc given to them with the comments from their peers on it. This has been a really great way to develop, practice, and learn how to appreciate others! When I have compiled the appreciation comments, I read the letter out loud to the class (or the student can themselves). Students have really enjoyed this and often ask me who is on the list next! So far we have over ¾ of the entire grade complete

We have also started our poetry unit. Students completed a scavenger hunt to locate terms of definitions and we've begun annotating poems looking for those terms. Students will also be writing their own poems throughout our unit, so be on the lookout for those on their SeeSaw accounts!

### READING:

We've finished up the legends and mythology unit. Students read the mythology story of Prometheus, Cyclops, and Medusa. The unit ended with students writing from Medusa's point of view of her banishment and how she was unfairly treated and killed. The students were quite creative and their stories were enjoyable to read! They will upload their story to their SeeSaw account so you can check out your student's work soon! We have moved on to a class novel, called Unwind by Neal Shusterman. The kids are LOVING this book! It is set in a futuristic time where three teens are fighting to stay alive and not be 'unwound' Ask your student about this, they will love to share what we've been reading!



## CONESTOGA LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

7-12 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, MS. FRITZ

The Life Skills program at the high school has had a very busy year! We started out the year missing one of our members who participated in a year-long program at the Goodwill store in Bellevue. The student has been able to receive hands on training and experience what it's like to have a "real job" yet still getting the daily structure and guidance he required. The best part is, this young man was paid for his time and effort working at the Goodwill store! Our Life Skills family will be losing another student to this wonderful program next year as well!

Due to Covid, our program had to make a few changes this year including how we purchased groceries. The students were introduced to online grocery shopping which did allow for lessons in comparison shopping as well as some practice with buying simulations. In December, the students all gave handmade gifts to friends and family for Christmas! Some of the gifts they made were; lava lamps, ribbon Christmas trees, duct tape wallets, and sun catchers made from melted beads.

In addition to basic functional academics, students in Life Skills spend time throughout the day learning valuable life skills such as laundry, and basic cooking, as well as performing jobs both in the classroom and around the school building. This year, they got to take the skills they've learned, and put them to use in real life work experiences. Two of our students have been attending a work-based learning experience at No Frills in Plattsmouth on Tuesday's and Thursday's. The rest of the class has been going to Lake Ridge Golf Course and working around the restaurant, lounge, and clubhouse. Our goal is to continue to seek out and provide opportunities for real work experiences within our community; and we hope to be able to partner with many more businesses in the coming years!

Coming up on April 28, we will be participating in the Special Olympics track meet hosted by Ashland-Greenwood. Students in Life Skills will be competing against 10 other schools in 8 different events. So far there are over 80 kids registered to participate! Each student in the Life Skills class is allowed to take one partner from their regular ed classes, which means we will have 16 students in the Special Olympics this year! Spectators are welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information, feel free to reach out to Ms. Fritz. [cfritz@conestogacougars.org](mailto:cfritz@conestogacougars.org)



# EDUCATIONQUEST FOUNDATION COLLEGE PLANNING BULLETIN

## 7-12 GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, MRS. KREIFELS

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

April 2021

Seniors...It's decision time!

Here's how to make your final college decision.

Compare your college acceptance letters, financial aid award notifications, and campus visit notes. List the pros and cons of each school using the following criteria:

**Location** – Is the college too close? If you come home every weekend, you won't experience true campus life. Is the college too far away? If so, you may not make it home as often as you'd like.

**Cost** – Can your family afford the school? What can you expect for financial aid beyond your freshman year? Did you receive renewable scholarships? How much in student and parent loans will be needed to cover expenses?

**Academic program** – Which college offers the degree program that best fits your career interests? What happens if you change majors? Does the college offer other degree programs that interest you?

**Student life** – Does the school offer activities you will enjoy? If you plan to live on campus, do you like the housing arrangements? Will you have an opportunity to work on or near campus?

Make your final decision by May 1 and then notify the colleges you're rejecting so they can offer your spot, and financial aid, to another student.

### April "To Do" List

#### Seniors

- \_\_\_ Continue applying for scholarships.
- \_\_\_ Make your final college decision.
- \_\_\_ Start purchasing dorm essentials.
- \_\_\_ Start looking for a summer job.

#### Juniors

- \_\_\_ Register by May 7 for the June 12 ACT.

For free help with college planning, contact EducationQuest Foundation:

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## CONESTOGA WINTER ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR, MR. JASON AHRENS

#### Dance Team

State Champions! The Dance Team won the State Championship- in the Hip-Hop division making that FIVE State Championships in four years. The team also placed 3rd in the Pom division.

#### Cheer Team

3rd Place at State Cheer in the Non Building/ Non Tumbling Category.

#### Mock Trial

9th Place at State in their first year of competition.

#### Music

Nebraska All-State Choir: Lily Drannen

Nebraska All-State Band: Levi Bell, Jasmine Rainey, Kyler Zimmerman

#### Speech

State Qualifiers: Lily Drannen and Jasmine Rainey qualified for State in Duet Acting

NSAA Academic All-State: Lily Drannen, John McConnell

Letter Winners: Lindee Watson, Ella Lewis, Jasmine Rainey, Lily Drannen, John McConnell

#### Wrestling

Capitol Conference Medalists: Cameron Williams- Conference Champion, Keaghan Chini- 2nd, Carter Plowman- 2nd, Braden Ruffner-3rd, Asher Koehnen-4th

State Qualifiers: Cameron Williams, Braden Ruffner, Keaghan Chini, Carter Plowman

State Medalists: Cameron Williams- 4th, Keaghan Chini-6th

NSAA Academic All-State: Braden Ruffner, Keaghan Chini

#### Boys Basketball

Lane Fox- First Team Capitol Conference, Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-State, NSAA Academic All-State

Benjamin Welch- Honorable Mention All-Conference, Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-State, NSAA Academic All-State

Ty Fox- Honorable Mention All Conference, Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-State

Jack Welch- Honorable Mention All- Omaha Area,

#### Girls Basketball

Myah Cummings- Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-State

Lindee Watson-Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-Conference, Honorable Mention All-State

Sophia Ackerman- Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, Honorable Mention All-Conference

Jennifer Sedlacek- NSAA Academic All-State

Taylor McClatchey- Honorable Mention All-Omaha Area, NSAA Academic All-State

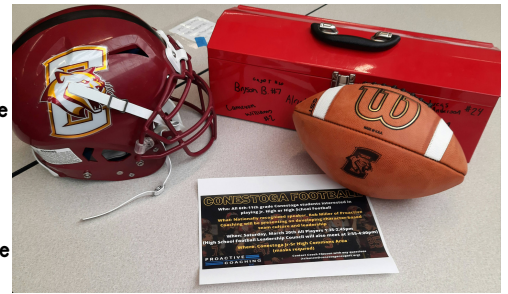




## FOOTBALL

### COACH, MR. TRENTON CLAUSEN

The Jr. High and High School Football teams were able to take advantage of a great experience on Saturday, March 20th. We welcomed Rob Miller of Proactive Coaching to present to our athletes. Rob is a nationally recognized speaker who assists High School, College, and Professional sports teams across the country to develop and promote programs that develop a character-based team culture and leadership. His first presentation was for the entire team and highlighted what characteristics a great person, athlete, and teammate need to possess. He spoke about how the choices that we make will bring us to our results and that the best athletes stand out through their actions and choices being different and noticeable in a positive way. His second presentation was to our 2021 Football Leadership Council.



During this presentation, he challenged the leaders to embody our three team beliefs of Relentless Effort, Attitude of Excellence, and Accountable as a Team. He spoke on what actions and choices must be carried out in order to be an effective leader. Many of our leaders took his message to heart and are setting to accomplish a goal this spring and summer which is to welcome any students wanting to make our football team better to join us this upcoming season. They talked about how everyone's role on the team is different but important. We hope to continue bringing things to Conestoga to continue improving our kids and teams

## POWERLIFTING

### COACH, MR. TRENTON CLAUSEN

It was an exciting Powerlifting Season for our students at Conestoga. This is the third year that a Powerlifting team has been offered at Conestoga and our number of participants has increased each year. This season was a bit different though because we were unable to compete at any meets. In past years we have participated in two meets each year but with COVID these meets were not held. This did not stop our team members from practicing after school every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We averaged 16 students for each practice with both boys and girls from both Jr. High and High School grades participating. Our students completed exercises that built confidence, proper technique, and strength in each of the exercises performed in the sport of Powerlifting. These exercises include: Back Squat, Bench Press, and Deadlift. Some students were experienced in the sport while others were participating for the first time. Since we were unable to compete at any meets, we held a mock meet for the students that wanted to participate. Dawson Hardesty, Jake Heronimus, Logan Chini, Chadren Katzenstein, Alrich Rigonios, Levi Lindsey, Trace Widler, Trey Rodis, Elijah Egley, Gabby Landon, Madison Bridges, Mickey Turner-Hickey, and Gabe Turner-Hickey all participated in our mock meet and many personal records were broken. Unlike past seasons, we were not able to have winter sport athletes join us because we were not competing at any meets. We are eager to have our winter athletes join us in competing next year! Thank you to all of the students that attended practices this past season and we look forward to having more students join us next winter!



## CONESTOGA GIRLS COMPLETE 2020-21 SEASON

### HEAD COACH, MR. TONY THIES

The Conestoga girls basketball program wrapped up its 2020-21 season on February 16th. The Cougars finished the season with a record of 6-14, doubling their win total from a season ago. In a year marked by uncertainties, all involved in the program were thankful to get a full season of basketball played. The Cougars were led in scoring this season by Lindee Watson who averaged 11.5 PPG and grabbed 6.1 RPG. Lindee's efforts earned her All-Conference Honorable Mention & All-State Honorable Mention. Senior Myah Cummings also garnered postseason honors. Cummings was selected for All-State Honorable Mention after posting 8.9 PPG, 3.1 RPG, 2.3 APG, and 1.5 SPG. Rounding out the postseason awards was Sophomore Sophia Ackerman earning All-Conference Honorable Mention by averaging 5.7 PPG, 7.8 RPG, and 1.3 SPG. Taylor McClatchey and Mati Steckler rounded out the starting lineup. Taylor played a major role all over the floor, leading in steals (2.1), assists (3.4), and 3 point % (33%). Mati was the Cougars' best defensive stopper, taking on the opposing team's best player.

Senior Jennifer Sedlacek provided reserve minutes and served as a valuable leader for the Cougars. Sophomores Alison Gansemer, MacKaylee Madsen, and Jameson Yost all saw their roles increase this season and provided big minutes down the stretch of the season. Our junior varsity and reserve teams finished with a record of 7-7. Sophomores Sophia Tegels and Haven Zimmerman led the way for those groups, along with Junior Danie Parriott. Sophomore Addie Priefert and Freshman Dani Ahrens were able to make big shots for the JV and reserve team throughout the year. Freshmen Harleigh Vogler and Evelyn Murdoch showed great improvement throughout the season. The Cougars are grateful for a healthy and successful season and look forward to getting back to work very soon!





## IN A SEASONS OF SETBACKS, SPEAKERS SHINE ONLINE

### SPEECH COACH, JESSICA SCHLICHTEMEIER

This speech season was one unlike any other. Due to COVID, this season took on a digital aspect as competitors battled speakers from across the state as well as questionable Wifi. A majority of our meets were virtual - either via Zoom or pre-recorded/asynchronous. While many students opted not to compete this season due to the solitary nature of performing for a computer, we did have five students who took on this unique challenge. After a heartbreaking end to last season, the returning member definitely made up for lost time. The upside to this one-of-a-kind season was the team wasn't constricted by distance or weather. Typically, the speech team competes in 12 or 13 meets during a season and those who also compete in basketball, wrestling, or do cheer and dance often miss many meets. This year Conestoga Speech members competed in a grand total of 20 meets and many students were able to compete in two a week, usually recording for an asynchronous meet early in the week and then competing via Zoom on a Friday night or Saturday morning. Tournaments that would have traditionally been cancelled due to snow were able to go on thanks to Zoom. The digital nature also allowed alumni from Chicago, Colorado, and Kansas to judge throughout the season, allowing Coach Schlichtemeier to serve as tech support for competitors when needed. We were fortunate enough by the beginning of February to pick up a handful of in-person meets. Transitioning from a Zoom audience to a real live audience was a challenge in and of itself. The team rose to every challenge thrown at them and were able to have a successful season despite the setbacks. While a small team of 5 doesn't usually fare well in team sweepstakes, every member of the team secured a tournament championship during the season and all members earned their letter prior to the post-season. The team was also able to host two tournaments this year. Our home invitational was done asynchronously, hosting 26 teams from across Nebraska from all NSAA classes, as well as a team from Texas. We also hosted the Class B-I district in person at the beginning of March. Four of our five members made district finals and seniors Jasmine Rainey and Lily Drannen represented the team at the state speech tournament in Kearney on March 18th in duet acting. The junior high season is getting underway and we are excited to see what our "Junior Trendsetters" will bring to our program.



### RESULTS

Fairbury Asynch January 9th: Lindee Watson 1st Varsity  
Extemporaneous, John McConnel 1st Novice Extemp

Omaha Westside Zoom January 15th: Lily Drannen 1st Poetry

Ashland Greenwood Zoom January 16th: Lily Drannen 3rd Varsity  
Poetry, John McConnell 3rd Novice Extemp

Concordia University HS Classic Asynch January 18-22: Lindee  
Watson 1st Extemp, Ella Lewis 3rd Poetry, John McConnell 4th  
Extemp, 5th Persuasive

Lincoln Southwest Zoom January 23rd: Lily Drannen 4th Poetry

Thayer Central Asynch January 23rd: John McConnell 2nd Novice  
Persuasive, 5th Novice Extemp, Jasmine Rainey 6th Dramatic  
Interp

Logan View Asynch January 30th: Ella Lewis 1st Poetry, John  
McConnell 5th Persuasive

Louisville In Person January 30th: Lily Drannen 2nd Poetry, Lindee  
Watson 6th Extemp

Grete Zoom February 6th: John McConnell 4th Novice Persuasive,  
5th Novice Extemp

Beatrice Asynch February 10th: Lindee Watson 4th Extemp

Marian Zoom February 12th: Lily Drannen 2nd Poetry

Auburn In Person February 13th: Lily Drannen 1st Poetry, Lily  
Drannen and Jasmine Rainey 2nd Duet

South Central Asynch February 13th: Ella Lewis 1st Poetry, Lindee  
Watson 2nd Extemp, John McConnell 4th Persuasive, 5th Extemp

David City Aquinas In Person February 20th: Lily Drannen 1st  
Honors Poetry (7th), Lily Drannen and Jasmine Rainey 1st Honors  
Duet (7th)

Nebraska Capitol Conference Asynch February 20th: Lily Drannen  
and Jasmine Rainey 1st Duet, Lindee Watson 2nd Extemp, 4th  
Inform, Ella Lewis 3rd Poetry, John McConnell 4th Extemp, 6th  
Persuasive, Lily Drannen 5th Poetry

Conestoga Asynch February 27th: Lily Drannen 1st Poetry, Lindee  
Watson 5th Extemp

B-I Districts In Person March 8th: Ella Lewis 6th Poetry, Lindee  
Watson 4th Extemp, Lily Drannen 4th Poetry, Lily Drannen and  
Jasmine Rainey 2nd Duet Acting (state qualifier)

State at Kearney High March 18th: Lily Drannen and Jasmine  
Rainey 15th Duet Acting

# COUGARETTES DANCE TEAM

COACH, MRS. ANGIE HOGUE

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's learning to dance in the rain...

Last March, the world basically shut down just before our tryouts. No school meant no dance! We were all devastated! We had no idea what our season would look like or if we would even get to have one! In June, we started the process with virtual tryout meetings. The girls finally were able to come to school and learn a tryout routine in designated sections, keeping six feet apart at all times. They had a short amount of time to learn the materials and they would come back a couple of days later and tryout! Each girl had a time slot that they would be let in the side door of the gym to show off their dance skills individually for a panel of judges. I'm sure, for some of them, that was terrifying! Not everyone is meant to perform as a soloist, but they all braved the task and gave it their best! I can't tell you how exciting it was to finally have a team to start working with! We quickly began having virtual practices and a few socially distant practices in person. As we prepared for camp, it was far from a normal summer for us. Typically, we plan to travel somewhere else for the four craziest days of our dance lives, and usually at camp we have a routine that we have been working on all summer to compete with. We didn't get to do that this year. Instead, our camp instructors came to us, and we made the best of it! They still learned some awesome routines that they were evaluated on, did drills down, and had tryouts to be named All-American. While we still had fun, we sure did miss that opportunity to bond as a team during the typical long and exhausting days and late nights at an away camp! This year, at our home camp, I'm proud to say we had seven girls named All-American; Kenna, Myah Mati, Morgan, Emory, Addie and James. All nine members earned blue ribbons for their routine evals, and Mati was named our Drill Down Queen, which is one of the most exciting honors to get at a UDA camp!

With the 2020-2021 school year approaching, we wondered what half-time would look like for us, or if we would even have them at all! We were so very thankful for the opportunity to perform this year, and even though you couldn't see their smiles through their masks, they were beaming with excitement to be on our "stage" in the middle of the football field. As the fall season wrapped up, we started wondering if we would need to start preparing for state! We weren't sure what that would look like either. We were informed that it could look a lot of different ways, so we began preparing as we normally would, all the while hoping for the best!

As the pandemic seemed to worsen, we worried about being able to perform for basketball season due to attendance restrictions. Again, we were thankful we still got to perform. The state competition was approaching and we were preparing as normal (well, as normal as we could with quarantines due to Covid). We dealt with more cancellations due to snow than ever and lack of gym space to practice in! Despite these setbacks, we were willing to take what we could get! The girls kept working as hard as they could, just like they always have.

This group of girls is amazing! They all bring something special to our team. The best thing about these girls is that they dance for each other, whether that is in practice or during a performance! They encourage and hold each other accountable! The number one contributing factor to the success of this team is this characteristic. It's tradition, and it's the most important part of our Conestoga Dance Team culture!

This year wasn't easy. I have been coaching for many years and this was by far my most challenging year with everything that we faced. Walking away with our fifth straight state championship title was just the best feeling for all of us! We are so thankful we got the opportunity to compete and defend our title. The girls brought home a championship in Hip-Hop this year and had a 3rd place finish in Pom! They competed against 20 other Pom teams in Class C-I and 12 other Hip Hop teams! I am so proud of the girls for staying positive through it all and keeping their eyes on the prize. I can only begin to imagine the stories they will have to tell someday of this season and how it all worked out!

We just finished up with our tryouts this year and welcomed two new girls, Sophia and Piper, to the team to fill the shoes of our two graduating seniors, Kenna and Myah. We are all really going to miss them both and we wish them the best as they go off to college to start their bright futures! We had an incredible group of freshmen tryout for the team this year. I think after they work on a few things that the judges saw, they will come back super strong and ready to help us increase the numbers on our team after tryouts next year! We look forward to that, and we are really proud of them all for working so hard this past weekend for tryouts!

As we wrap up this season and prepare to start the next one, we would like to thank the Conestoga administration, staff, students, our dance parents, and our community for all the support they have given us throughout our season. We take pride in representing CHS and enjoy every second of it!

This pandemic has been very difficult for all of us, but it has proven that we all have the ability to make the best of every situation and fight for the chance to do what we love. For the Conestoga Dance Team, all we needed to do was hold on tight to each other, jump out in that storm, and dance our hearts out in the rain.

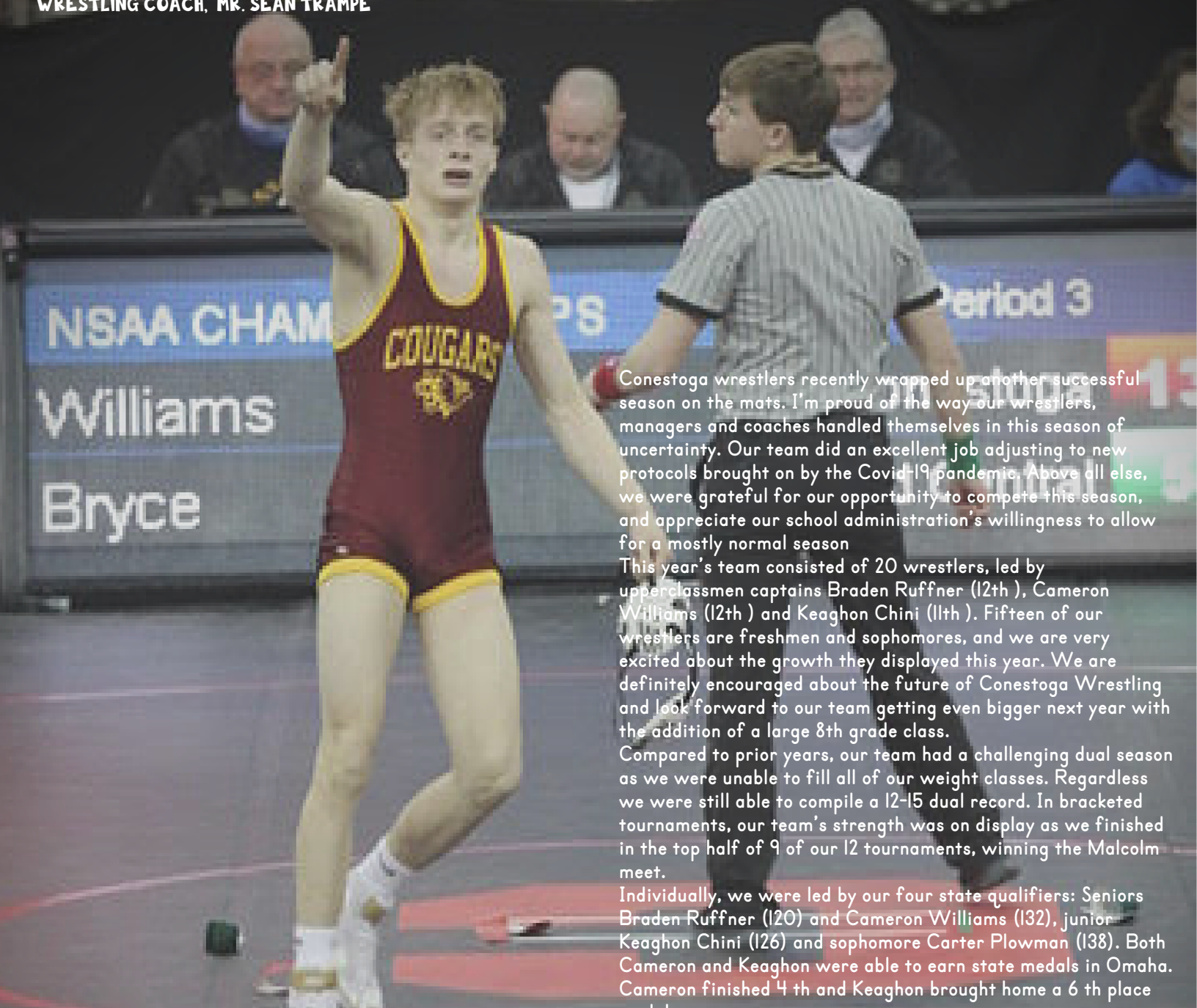
Go Cougars <3





# COUGAR WRESTLERS CELEBRATE SEASON SUCCESS

WRESTLING COACH, MR. SEAN TRAMPE



Conestoga wrestlers recently wrapped up another successful season on the mats. I'm proud of the way our wrestlers, managers and coaches handled themselves in this season of uncertainty. Our team did an excellent job adjusting to new protocols brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Above all else, we were grateful for our opportunity to compete this season, and appreciate our school administration's willingness to allow for a mostly normal season.

This year's team consisted of 20 wrestlers, led by upperclassmen captains Braden Ruffner (12th), Cameron Williams (12th) and Keaghon Chini (11th). Fifteen of our wrestlers are freshmen and sophomores, and we are very excited about the growth they displayed this year. We are definitely encouraged about the future of Conestoga Wrestling and look forward to our team getting even bigger next year with the addition of a large 8th grade class.

Compared to prior years, our team had a challenging dual season as we were unable to fill all of our weight classes. Regardless we were still able to compile a 12-15 dual record. In bracketed tournaments, our team's strength was on display as we finished in the top half of 9 of our 12 tournaments, winning the Malcolm meet.

Individually, we were led by our four state qualifiers: Seniors Braden Ruffner (120) and Cameron Williams (132), junior Keaghon Chini (126) and sophomore Carter Plowman (138). Both Cameron and Keaghon were able to earn state medals in Omaha. Cameron finished 4th and Keaghon brought home a 6th place medal.

Both Braden (143 wins) and Cameron (142 wins) surpassed the previous school record for most wins in a career. Braden also set a new school record for the most takedowns in a career with 291. The hard work and solid, consistent leadership displayed by our seniors will be greatly missed. They fittingly leave the wrestling program as two of the most decorated wrestlers in school history, and we are very proud of their efforts and of what kind of men they are. A special congratulations is in order for Cameron Williams, as he has been selected to take part in the Nebraska Scholastic Wrestling Coaches Association All-Star Dual in Grand Island on June 12th.

Thank you, Cougar Nation, for another year of great support. We appreciate all that you do to help make wrestling such a great team to be a part of at Conestoga!





# CONESTOGA BASKETBALL 20-21 END OF SEASON

## HEAD COACH, MR. JASON AHRENS

The 2020-2021 will be remembered as the COVID season by most but I will choose to remember it for a different reason and that's for the high quality people that made up our basketball program. As a coaching staff we considered ourselves fortunate to have been able to coach this team and if COVID-19 did anything positive, it gave us greater appreciation for things we once took for granted. This team freshman through seniors were a true pleasure to be around each and every day, they brought enthusiasm, positive energy, and commitment to the team and each other that was truly special and rare.

### "The Great Eight"

This team was a true reflection of the leadership provided by the players within the program. Especially our Juniors and Seniors that are now referred to as The "Great Eight". They have a tremendous desire to do their best, they lead by example, and they serve as great role models on and off the court for our team, school, and community. An incredible example of this is all eight of them meet the standards to qualify for Academic All-State.

### "Keep Moving Forward"

Our main goal as a program is to get a little bit better each day, if each day we are a little bit then we were the day before, over the course of a period of time we will be much better than where we started.

Rocky said it best "It ain't about how hard you hit, it's about how you can get hit and keep moving forward" The 2020-2021 regularly used this quote to help inspire us to continue to improve.

### Proof of Program Growth

- Third consecutive 10+ win season (2018-2021) a feat that has only happened one other time in school history and it was forty years ago. (1978-1981).
- The Class of 2021 are fourth all-time in school history for total varsity wins over the course of their careers, they won more games than every class since the Class of 1984.
- The varsity win total over the past 6 seasons (2015-2021) is more than the win total for the 15 seasons (2000-2015) prior to 2015.

### Senior's Lasting Impact

During the seniors freshman team retreat we discussed how they wanted to be remembered and the power they have to positively or negatively impact someone's day, year, life.

Four years later it's safe to say they took advantage of their time at Conestoga. They are hard-working, high character, and kind people that positively impacted our team and our school. It's been my great pleasure to have been their coach and to have watched them grow into the great young men that they are today.

### Team Awards

#### Varsity:

Offensive Player of the Year: Lane Fox  
Defensive Player of the Year: Koby Vogler  
Most Improved Player: Ty Fox

#### Junior Varsity:

Offensive Player of the Year: Noah Simones  
Defensive Player of the Year: Evan Svanda  
Most Improved Player: Jayden Widler

### Guiding Principle Award Winners:

Believe: Johnny Welter  
Care: Jack Welch  
Discipline: Ben Welch  
Toughness: Koby Vogler

### Teammates Of the Year:

Lane Fox and Benjamin Welch

### Letter Winners:

Seniors: Lane Fox, Koby Vogler, Benjamin Welch, Tobias Nolting  
Juniors: Ty Fox, Lucas Michel, Sophomores: Jack Welch, Freshman: Noah Simones

### 2020-2021 Team Members:

Seniors: Lane Fox, Koby Vogler, Benjamin Welch, Tobias Nolting, Juniors: Evan Svanda, Johnny Welter, Ty Fox, Lucas Michel, Sophomores: Jack Welch, Jayden Widler, Kaden Simmerman, Kieran Samson, Freshmen: Carter Arens, Brody McClatchey, Jake Cooke, Zach Smith, Aaron Watson, Noah Simones, Coaches: Nick Hegge, Jesse Swantek, Jason Ahrens, Student Managers: Andy Lamoureux, Ty Walker, Rylee Johnson, Bradin Van Winkle, Owen Trofholz



**Tobias, Benjamin, Koby and Lane**

Thank you for everything that you have done for Conestoga Basketball, your teammates, and your coaches. You have made an impact that will last a lifetime in ways you don't even know. I am fortunate to have gotten to be your coach and I am proud of you all!





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