

# Tanagers' Nest News

## Certain Signs of Autumn!

by [Jon Frey](#) on September 28, 2022

A great week of Homecoming activities at VHS capped a nice start to the 2022-23 school year! Wins in volleyball, football, boys and girls soccer, a conference championship in boys golf and high placings by the cross-country team and the marching and pep bands performing extensively throughout the week and weekend, made this a Homecoming week to remember! This weekend, our actors hit the stage with the performances of the fall play, *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. As always, it will be a great show!

With the Homecoming festivities behind us, it seems appropriate to look ahead at what October has in store for the VHS Tanagers...

The month of October will be a busy one in that we will bring the first nine-week term to a conclusion, and begin to wrap up some of our fall sports (already!) and seniors and juniors will each have a turn at testing - the seniors will take

the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) test and juniors will take the South Dakota interim assessment to the spring Smarter Balanced tests they will take in April. There will be more about both assessments later in this newsletter.

One final thought, as we work through the school year. I realize there are going to be times of frustration born out of a missed detail or miscommunication on our part as a school that occur, even a misunderstanding or two! We all make mistakes. Alexander Pope stated in "An Essay on Criticism," that "to err is human, to forgive divine." We are all human and given the way the world is right now, we all need to give each other some consideration. Given this, I was disappointed to find out about a recent social media post dripping with false information that was used as a conduit to spread discontent about our lunch program this



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A circular logo featuring a red tanager bird perched on a branch, with the word "TANAGERS" written in a grey arc below it.

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past week. No message was left for me to return a call, nothing to the director of Lunchtime Solutions ... straight to social media.

The real problem with a reaction of this nature is that if the facts are not accurate (and they were not) it just ends up hurting feelings and causing frustration (which it did) while nobody is helped in the process. Please know, I will always respond to emails or phone messages left for me. Please reach out when you have a concern. Stop in. Let's have a meeting, if necessary. Let's discuss the issue. We may not always agree, but I will always listen. Spreading inaccurate information as a means to denigrate the efforts of others, while an unfortunate sign of the times, helps nobody. I regularly challenge our students with this message and I'm going to ask the same of anyone reading this ... Let's all work to be better! Our students deserve it. We can and must make the effort.

*Jon*



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## Parent-Teacher Conferences this week, at VHS

by [Jon Frey](#) on September 21, 2022

VHS will host Parent-Teacher conferences on October 6th and 7th. High school teachers will be available for conferences on Thursday from 2:00-8:00pm and on Friday from 8:30 - 1:00pm. I have asked teachers to offer the ability for parents to conference by phone, Zoom

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call or even email from 2:00-4:00pm Thursday and 11:30-1:00pm on Friday. All other times, teachers will be in the high school commons for face-to-face meetings with parents.

You should be receiving email messages from your student's teachers inviting you to a conference with them. Please feel free to contact your students' teachers here at the school should you have any questions or concerns at any time.

## Attorney Dishes “Digital Citizenship”

by **Jon Frey** on September 28, 2022



This week, VHS and VMS were visited by Karen Haase, a partner in KSB School Law offices in Sioux Falls and Lincoln, Nebraska. KSB Law partners with schools on a wide variety of legal matters, but has made a name for themselves in and around the region in part, for their presentations to students about the importance of being a good, safe “digital citizen.”

What is “digital citizenship?” One web source put it this way ... *Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the Internet, and digital devices to engage with society on any level.*

As the rate of technological advancement continues to increase, the world as a whole is becoming more dependent on the Internet for day-to-day activities. That makes this a crucial topic to teach today's students.

Good digital citizenship for students engages them and shows them how to connect with one another, empathize with each other, and create lasting relationships through digital tools.

Bad digital citizenship, on the other hand, entails cyberbullying, irresponsible social media usage, and a general lack of knowledge about how to safely use the Internet. (<https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship>, accessed 9/29/22).

Vermillion Schools are working to increase educational experiences for students in both the middle and high school that enhance student's understanding of what it takes to be a good “digital citizen.”

During her presentations, Haase offered students updates on recent case law on a variety of topics including social media activities during and outside of school, sending inappropriate images via cell phones (such as sexting) and where school and legal boundaries fall on topics such as bullying and harassment. At times, the content brought



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about laughter and light moments and at other times Haase had students pondering challenging ideas with their friends to determine with whom they felt the courts might have sided in individual cases.

Overall, the students in both schools were engaged in the presentations and several shared that they enjoyed her presentation and learned a great deal. Haase was highly complimentary of both audiences and we look forward to having her return in coming years!



## Saturday School - the What and Why of it all.

By [Jon Frey](#) on October 1, 2022

Those of us of a certain age tend to hear the words, “Saturday School” and it conjures up one image - [The Breakfast Club](#). A classic 80’s movie that laid bare the differences and similarities in high schoolers at a time long before SnapChat, TikTok reels and even cell phones. Saturday School detentions have been utilized by schools all over the world for infractions large and small as a consequence for student behaviors that occurred during school by inconveniencing students “on their time.”



After several years of scheduling Saturday School dates on an as-needed basis, VHS has moved to a more regular schedule of Saturday School dates in 2022-23. The purpose of this is to provide an *intermediate level* of consequence between detention and In-School Suspension. The primary infractions that will result in a student assigned to Saturday School would be:



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- Failure to attend Thursday Morning Academic Time after being put on the list by a teacher due to the need for extra academic assistance.
- Excessive tardiness to class or school
- Unexcused absences to school
- Minor disciplinary infractions that might require something more significant than detention but do not quite merit In-School Suspension.

Currently, we send messages on the Friday prior to Saturday School as a courtesy reminder to parents and students of the assignment. We are continuing to work on the system of notifications because we do not have the ability to fully customize the notification to the individual student. In other words, while we can say which student in your household has been assigned to come either to Thursday Morning Academic Time or Saturday School, we do not have the ability to specify which teacher or teachers has asked them to come in; that information would be unique to each student requiring each message to be very different. We will continue to work on improving the details in each message. To that end, we will try to find a way to send the Saturday School reminders out sooner. Currently, we have waited until all teachers could meet with their students before assigning the Saturday School following a Thursday morning. With our block schedule on Thursdays, teachers will not have seen all of their students yet by the end of the day Thursday. However, waiting until the end of the day on Friday requires a lot of information to be gathered, filtered and sent on Friday afternoon/evening.

In the meantime, I will list below the future Saturday School dates. Please encourage your students to attend on Thursday mornings when invited to minimize the likelihood of a Saturday School assignment. If it is assigned for excessive tardiness or unexcused absences, we will directly inform the student from the office.

### Future Saturday School Dates:

- October 15, 2022
- October 29, 2022
- November 12, 2022
- December 3, 2022
- December 17, 2022

All sessions will be from 8:30-11:30 with school doors opening at 8:00am and locking at 11:00am. Student time assigned will vary with each infraction.

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## Minga ~ App or Website

by **Jon Frey** on September 29, 2022

Wow! September went fast! While we're not quite ready to roll out the parent invitations to Minga, student participation with the app continues to grow. We are still learning about all the different ways we can utilize this new communication and student identification application. As I mentioned last month, we are not fully implemented yet, but some things our students can see and have been utilizing already in the app include:

- The digital school ID - it displays not just the student's name (and pictures will come once we get "Picture Day" done) but also an icon indicating privileges the student has such as -
  - The Unplanned Period Pass (UPP) for a given period of the day.
  - An Online Dual Credit class and corresponding free period.
  - An On-Campus Dual Credit class.
  - A classroom Tutoring period.
  - Even a Student Work Release period.
- A notification right at the top of the app's message "wall" that states the bell schedule for the day.
- Surveys to gather quick feedback from students on miscellaneous topics.
- Push notifications to let them know there is news in a group to which they belong, or an update has been sent out to all students.



There is more to come. In the near future, we hope to roll out invitations to parents to login to Minga from a computer or phone to see and receive the same messaging we are sharing with your students!

## Important Dates & Information for Fall & Winter

- October 1st - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library

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- October 6th & 7th - **Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- October 10th - **No School, Native American Heritage Day**
- October 15th - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library
- October 18th - **End of Term 1**
- October 21st - **No School, Teacher Inservice**
- October 29th - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library
- November 4th - **1:30 Dismissal - Teacher Professional Learning Teams**
- November 11th - 9:40am Veterans Day Assembly, VHS
- November 12th - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library
- November 15th - **Picture Retake Day** (Packets available in the high school office)
- November 23rd to 25th - **No School, Thanksgiving Break**
- December 3rd - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library
- December 17th - Saturday School - 8:30-11:30am, VHS Library
- December 19th & 20th - Semester Tests
- December 21st to January 3, 2023 - **No School, Christmas Break**
- January 4, 2023 - **No School, Teacher Inservice**
- January 16, 2023 - **No School, MLK National Holiday**
- February 16th & 17th - **Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences**

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## Activities News

### Benefits to Activities Participation in High School

by **Jason Huska & Jon Frey** on September 20, 2022

As we begin winding down the fall activities and begin to move into our second season of school activities, it is important to take a little time to consider the impact school activities have on the overall student high school experience. Whether a student participates in athletics or academic activities, music or speech, clubs or political interest groups, they each have an important role in the life of a school.




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Jon Frey, Principal ~ Jennifer Badke, Administrative Assistant

Jason Huska, Assistant Principal / Activities Director ~ Jasmine Stewart, Administrative Assistant



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As athletic and activity participants ourselves in high school and college, both of us know firsthand the valuable importance of the life lessons activities and athletics provide students. Between the two of us, thousands of hours were put into the practice, preparation and performances in football, baseball, basketball, wrestling, speech, debate, theater, National Honor Society, chorus and band, just to name the big ones. Once we started our careers in education, coaching football, basketball, baseball, softball, speech and debate also provided us the opportunity to continue to teach beyond the classroom.

A recent online posting on the National Federation of State High School Associations addressed the value of high school activities in this way:

## Benefits of Co-curricular or Education-based Activities

- Activities Support the Academic Mission of Schools. They are not a diversion, but rather an extension of a good educational program. Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally.
- Activities are Inherently Educational. Activity programs provide valuable lessons and skills for practical situations – like teamwork, fair play, and hard work. Through participation in activity programs, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. These are qualities students need if they are to become responsible adults, productive citizens and skilled professionals.
- Activities Promote Health and Well-being. Mental and physical health are improved through activities. Self-concept, self-image, physical activity, and weight management are a few of these health benefits realized through activity participation.
- Activities Foster Success in Later Life. Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success – in college, a career and becoming a contributing healthy member of society.



(<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/the-case-for-high-school-activities/>, accessed 9/25/22).

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At VHS, we have a high participation rate in student activities - nearly 83%! - which is something to brag about! However, we would always strive to increase that number. If your son or daughter has not quite found their niche in high school and you feel activity participation is something he/she would benefit from, let us know and we will reach out to them to see if we can help connect them to an activity or sport that may capture their interest!



## Student Services News

By [Luke Hayes & Laura Suing](#) on September 30, 2022

### National Career Readiness Certificate

On the morning of Wednesday, October 5th at 8:30am, all seniors will take part in taking the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessment. Below is more information about the NCRC assessment.

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC™) is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies skills necessary for workplace success. This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and verifies the following cognitive skills:

- Build confidence that your skills meet the needs of employers
- Show prospective employers concrete proof of the skills you have
- Problem solving and Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text



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- Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
- Locating, synthesizing and applying information presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics
- Also necessary for the Build Dakota Scholarship

## SD Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

The SD Interim Assessments are administered throughout the year to help teachers monitor student progress and be able to choose the right assessment at the right time.

They provide educators with actionable data about student knowledge and abilities to help teachers target instruction to meet students' individual learning needs.

Items include all the accessibility resources available in the spring summative assessment to help provide accurate results for students. (<https://doe.sd.gov/assessment/>, accessed 10/20/22).

## Dual Credit Courses

Dual Credit classes are up and running. Reminder, if your student is in need of a secure browser for his/her/their dual credit coursework, to stop into the Tech. Office at least two days in advance to check out a laptop that will support a secure browser.

Stay current with your course work and communicate with your instructor if you have questions or fall behind. Reach out to dual credit advisors with any concerns or questions if you are in need of help.

## Scholarships

Scholarships are starting to become available. Make sure to have your student stop into Student Services or check his/her/their email for more information.



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## Dual Credit Speech and Pre-Calculus/Calculus

If your student is interested in taking care of that freshman speech requirement at the college or university level while still in high school, look to have them enroll in CMST 101 offered through USD, taught by USD faculty, here at VHS in the spring semester.

Additionally, Pre-Calculus and Calculus will also be offered for credit to be signed up for in the spring semester. These math courses will be taught by Mr. Settles. Have your student see his/her/their counselor for more details.

## Free College Application Period

From October 3, 2022 through November 30, 2022, students may apply to as many South Dakota public colleges and universities as they wish during the free application period! For more information, please visit [Our Dakota Dreams](#).

## Student Services Important Reminders

### ACT TESTING

2022|2023

| TEST DATES                | REGISTRATION DEADLINES |               |                               |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
|                           | Regular Deadline       | Late Deadline | Photo Upload Standby Deadline |
| <b>September 10, 2022</b> | <b>August 5</b>        | August 19     | September 2                   |
| <b>October 22, 2022</b>   | <b>September 16</b>    | September 30  | October 14                    |
| <b>December 10, 2022</b>  | <b>November 4</b>      | November 11   | December 2                    |
| <b>February 11, 2023</b>  | <b>January 6</b>       | January 20    | February 3                    |
| <b>April 15, 2023</b>     | <b>March 10</b>        | March 24      | April 7                       |
| <b>June 10, 2023</b>      | <b>May 5</b>           | May 19        | June 2                        |
| <b>July 15, 2023*</b>     | <b>June 16</b>         | June 23       | July 7                        |





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## FAFSA

The 2023-2024 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available October 1, 2022. FAFSA can provide your student with grants, loans, and work study funds from the Federal Government. It is best to get it done early since some of the funds are available on a first come first served basis. For a short video on how to fill out the FAFSA form, please click [here](#). To fill out your FAFSA form, please visit [the FAFSA website](#).

### What are the deadlines for filling out the FAFSA form?

To be considered for federal student aid for the 2023-24 award year, you can complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form between Oct. 1, 2022, and 11:59 p.m. Central time (CT) on June 30, 2023.

Any FAFSA form corrections or updates must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT on Sept. 10, 2023. However, many states and colleges have earlier deadlines for applying for state and institutional financial aid, use Find your state's deadline. Check with your college or career school about its deadlines. Because of the variation in state and college deadlines, it's highly recommended that you fill out the FAFSA form as soon as you can after Oct. 1 to ensure that you don't miss out on available aid.<sup>1</sup>

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

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## Vermillion High School

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Student Aid Website, Office of Department of Education, Accessed June 28, 2022.