Soaring to new levels
Throughout the first quarter, many Alpha students have been promoted to the next level by working daily on their contracts and skills. Congratulations to these students for their hard work and dedication!

James F. 1 - 2a
Bakar I. 1 - 2a
Ricky K. 1 - 2a
Dana L. 1 - 2a
James M. 1 - 2a
Christian R. 1 - 2a
Naomi S-W. 1 - 2a
Brandon T. 1 - 2a
Brend’n W.-B. 1 - 2a
Antony C. 2b - 2c
Christopher R. 2b - 2c
Tyler S. 2b - 2c
Ma’Kye T. 2b - 2c
Dante C. 2c - 3
Cole H. 2c - 3
Logan H. 2c - 3
Javelle M. 2c - 3
Cedric O. 2c - 3
Myles K. 3 - 4

Students of the week
In order to achieve student of the week, students are required to maintain perfect attendance, have their skill card signed daily, make their daily goal, and have no time outs or time after school. Congratulations to those who have made it!

Atalame C. Bakar I.
Dyllan M. James M.
Kamil F. Logan H.
Malakai C. Naomi S-W
I would like to start by welcoming everyone to a new and exciting year at Alpha School. We have a number of new students in the program and would especially like to welcome them and their families and to let them know that if they have any questions or concerns to please feel free to contact the staff at Alpha School.

Next I would like to welcome our eight new staff members. Ms. Chiles and Mr. Thomsen accepted positions as Intervention Specialist. Ms. Chiles is responsible for North Time Out on the lower floor and works primarily with Middle and Elementary students. Mr. Thomsen works primarily with Junior and Senior High students on the top floor. I would also like to welcome Ms. McConnell who does resource work and student evaluations.

Alpha School has three new teachers: Mrs. Ritter, Ms. Essay and Mr. Jones. Ms. Essay works with Mr. Harkness in the Junior High One room, Mrs. Ritter teaches Literacy with Elementary and Middle School students and teaches Living Skills to Junior and Senior High school students. Mr. Jones teaches Social Studies and History in the High School classrooms.

I would also like to welcome Mrs. Stevens our new Social Worker and Mrs. Moller as the new Administrative Assistant. I'm sure many of you have already had a chance to speak with each of them during first quarter.

I am looking forward to the new school year and hope that you are too. We have a number of students currently in transition and several who will soon begin the journey back to public school. The staff have been working diligently to develop and implement academic and behavioral curriculum which will enable each of your students to successfully move through the program. I would like to encourage each of you to take the opportunity to participate in the Quarterly Teacher Parent Conferences to see the great things your son or daughter are doing. I would like to thank each of you for being a part of the program, and wish you a great school year.
Happy Autumn from the Elementary Class! We got off to a great start this year greeting three new students. We had 3 students promoted from Level 1 to 2A, and two Level 4 students transitioned part-time back to public school (and another Level 3 student is almost ready to move to Level 4). Exciting things are happening in our class!

This year in Math class, we are sharpening our basic skills in computation, especially learning our multiplication facts, and working on time, money, place value, and estimating, among other things. We have "Word Problem Wednesday" each week, and Power Problems every day, to master new math skills.

In Reading and English, we continue to work on parts of speech and sentence structure, and our four-square exercises have helped students become better writers. We are reading ONE CRAZY SUMMER by Rita Williams-Garcia, as a class, and it is getting very interesting! Our students also participate in individual reading; the recent book fair allowed us to purchase new books of all genres (thanks, Barnes and Noble!) so students are enjoying our expanded class library. Each student also has individually-tailored spelling lessons, and we have improved our spelling test grades a lot!

In Personal Growth, we are working on new skills to help us cope with anger and frustration, and reading WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR TEMPER FLARES: A KID'S GUIDE TO OVERCOMING PROBLEMS WITH ANGER. Our students are practicing role plays, relaxations, and progressing on their level contracts.

Each day, Middle School students come to our classroom for Reading and English (while Elementary students go to Science and Social Studies) and they are enjoying the funny autobiography DEAD END IN NORVELT, by Jack Gantos. They also are working on their writing and journaling skills, and language arts lessons.

First Quarter would not be complete without our annual trip to Vala's Pumpkin Patch, a field trip students earned by being on Level 2A or higher, and having complete daily work, and having no aggression during timeouts or time after school. We braved the chilly day to have lots of fun at Vala's, and as always, students were very well-behaved. We all enjoyed ourselves!

We are excited to move into Second Quarter, with new skills and goals, and we will be planning for our holiday program. Stay tuned for more fun and learning in the Elementary class!

During the first quarter of 2016 many students advanced on their level contracts. Many of our students are now level 2C and we expect our last level 1 student to progress to level 2A within a week or two. Honor roll for this quarter has been amazing, many of our students have been making it and it is fantastic to see them engaging so strongly with school.

For Personal Growth we’ve started something new in Middle School. Every Wednesday our classroom meets as a group with their social worker and transition specialist. These meetings involve building classroom unity and identity. In addition to these meetings we cover the behavioral skills and relaxation techniques needed to succeed at Alpha School, upon return to public school as well as at home.

In Math students began the year reviewing addition and subtraction. The class split into two groups. The first group is focusing on mastering multiplication skills, needed for more advanced mathematics. The second group has been focusing on the final skill sets in multiplication and are advancing into division.

In Science class we have started the year by focusing on the natural sciences. The class covered plant anatomy while conducting an experiment growing plants. Next we focused on animal behavior, adaptations, ecosystems, and anatomy. This section culminated in a bug project for which the students were encouraged to bring in their bug for study. This bug was then pinned similarly to how entomologists prepare their own specimens. Parts of the specimens will soon be photographed by staff and enlarged so the students can discuss what that structure does on that insect and how it is adapted for its environment. Accompany many science discussion's is Mr. Pufall's Bucket of Science in which materials are brought in for students view or interact with. This quarter’s bucket contained preserved exotic mantises, animal bones, a shark’s jaw, and a puffer skin.

In social studies the students explored the Civil Rights period by reading and discussing the book THE WATSON'S GO TO BIRMINGHAM, 1963 This book follows a family during the time period of the Birmingham bombing. After completing the book the students watched the movie adaption in class. The book's strong personal narrative also tied directly into student behavior by discussing the effects of bullying and family dynamics.

Elementary science also participated in Mr. Pufall’s Bucket of Science. They did their own version of the plant project but instead of doing a bug pinning exercise moved on to physical science. Social studies has focused on the formative years of the American West with an emphasis on Nebraska. Students learned about different tribes native to the Great Plains, the Oregon and Mormon Trails, and the develop of the city of Omaha.

The year is off to a great start and we are excited to see students develop both their academic and behavioral skills. As always Mr. Olson and Mr. Pufall welcome input from our student’s parents or guardians.
JH1 - Mr. Harkness & Ms. Essay

Junior High 1 has been busy this quarter! We have had four promotions: Myles K. has been promoted from level 3 to 4, Cole H. has been promoted from 2c to 3, Javelle M. has been promoted from 2c to 3, and Sai-Jahn C. has been promoted from level 2a to 2b. In Social Studies, JH1 has looked at the early civilizations that have lived in the United States. They then began to learn about the early European colonies in the United States.

In Language Arts we have been reading Ben Mikaelsen's TOUCHING SPIRIT BEAR. It's a novel about a young man who finds himself in trouble with the law after beating up one of his peers. Instead of going to jail, he is able to go through the process of Circle of Justice, which will have the main character live for an entire year by himself on an isolated island off the coast of Alaska. In Health class we recently created our own anti-smoking advertisement and they turned out great!

In Personal Growth the students began the year by making meme’s using the classroom rules. They have since worked on a variety of skills and have completed several objectives on their level contracts. In Physical Education they have had units in wiffle ball, football, and are now on a soccer unit. Overall, Junior High 1 is off to a good start for the year and looking forward to the rest of the year.

JH2 - Mr. Petersen & Mrs. Howery

We would like to start off listing our level promotions for JH2. We had one student move up from level 1 to level 2a, and two students move up from level 2b to 2c. We also had two students start transitioning part time to a public school. Our class this year was able to make its classroom contract in the first quarter. This was really exciting for the class because it has been awhile since we have made the contract. The students played a dodgeball tournament and had a pizza party afterwards.

We had many exciting classroom topics that we learned this quarter. In Personal Growth the students made Changing Negative Behavior Tree’s. The tree’s represented negative choices that they would like to change in the future. During Pre-algebra the students worked hard on solving equations with variables. We learned to isolate the variables by themselves. We also learned that we needed to use the inverse operation to get that variable by itself. In basic Math the students focused on order of operations. The students came up with their own form of PEMDAS sayings and created posters that will be up on our bulletin board. Because of Hurricane Mathews, the students wanted to learn about natural disasters. The students choose a natural disaster and researched their topic. After they researched they created a one page paper that they presented to the class.

Mr. Petersen and Mrs. Howery would like to thank all parents and guardians for all of the support they have given this quarter. We are excited to see what the rest of the year has to offer.
HS1 - Mr. Thiemann & Mr. Jones

The first quarter in High School 1 has flown by. We are having a great year so far and the students are making fantastic progress on their level contracts. Within the 1st quarter, many of our students have been promoted to higher levels: Dante C. went from level 2c to level 3, Chris R. went from 2b to 3, and both Ricky K. and James M. have gone from level 1 to level 2a. As a classroom, because of our awesome behavior during the first quarter, we have earned movie and food days for completing our classroom contracts.

Currently, the High School 1 students are learning about World Geography and Cultures from Mr. Jones. So far, we have covered the geography and cultures of United States, Canada, Mexico, and South America. In High School 2 World History, Mr. Jones and the students are learning about the beginning of human civilization and moving quickly towards really important times in history such as Greek Civilization and Roman Civilization.

English with Mr. Thiemann has been a blast so far. Both High School 1 and High School 2 have done some really cool work on personal essays, writing about things they love, hobbies they enjoy, and many more things. They have also made it through some really fun books this quarter such as COMPOUND by S. A. Boden, the story of a family trapped in an underground bunker after a nuclear attack.

In Personal Growth, High School 1 students have been working on great habits such as relaxation, discussion skills, using self-control, conflict management, and using role playing to learn how to manage certain situations. We have learned how breathing exercises, self-reflection, and calm meditation can refocus ourselves and put us in the right state of mind to be successful.

Last, almost all of our students have made Honor Roll throughout the quarter, with students like Atalame C, Dante C, Kamil F, Christopher R. and James M. all earning “Student of the Week.” We are really excited to start the 2nd quarter and continue the great progress we making.

HS2 - Mr. Crawford & Mr. Jackson

Greetings from High School 2

First off we would like to say Go Cowboys and Go Raiders!

It has been a fast start to the year and we have some promotions we would like to share with you!

Cedric and Logan was promoted from level 2C to level 3!
Tyler was promoted from level 2B to level 2C!
We have several students that are over 90% done with their current contracts.

All High School 2 students are currently in Geometry for math. We have been doing a little review from Algebra of last year and are currently working on Transversals. We have gone over complimentary and supplementary angles as well.

In Earth Science the students have been introduced to the planets in our solar system and learning the differences between the inner and outer planets. We look forward to making models of the planets in the next few weeks.

It’s football season and in Personal Growth, once a week, we have been showing football themed episodes that deal with overcoming obstacles. The students then wrote down what they took out of it and relate it to real life issues.

Thank you from High School 2!
The art room has been busy creating several masterpieces this fall. The Elementary students reviewed the elements and principles of art. They did several projects that review line, shape, pattern, color, and symmetry. They are currently working on a paper mache project.

The Middle School students also started out with a review on line and color. They showed their knowledge creating colors and did several projects that incorporated the color families. They just finished large grid drawings of fruit and then experiment with the medium of oil pastels.

The Junior and High School rooms did a review on color and forms. They then reviewed grid drawings and created a large scale painting of an animal of their choice. Currently they are finishing up their paper mache unit, where they create large bugs. We are extremely impressed with our students so far this year and we can't wait to see what else they can make.
Living Skills:

This quarter in Living Skills we have learned about a few different things. We started off the year learning about proper study skills and various study techniques. Next we moved on to nutrition and exercise. We talked about why nutrition is so important and how it affects our daily lives. We discussed healthy shopping options and how to make healthier choices. We also discussed physical activity and its importance. We ended the quarter learning about citizenship. We discussed the importance of voting and how to register to vote. We talked about the different political parties and what each of them stand for. We learned about the Bill of Rights and the certain freedoms that come with being an American citizen. We finished up the unit learning about how to be a good citizen. We discussed different things that everyone can do to be a good citizen at school and at home.

Literacy:

In Literacy we are working with Mrs. Kerst and Mrs. Derry on vocabulary. We do vocabulary words once a week so they can learn the meanings of different words in the books that they are reading in English. We have worked a lot on the different parts of speech and we did various activities that went along with each part. We finished up the quarter learning about punctuation and grammar. In Literacy we also do daily writing. We pick a topic and every student writes for five minutes to earn points for a fun day.
Miss. McFarland & Mrs. Stevens’s Social Worker Corner

It has been a busy start to the school year! I would like to introduce our new Social Worker, Angee Stevens. Mrs. Stevens will be working with students and their families in the Elementary, Middle, and Junior High 1 classrooms. Mrs. Stevens is an awesome addition to Alpha and we are so glad to have her!

The social workers held the first Caregiver Night of the year in September and Anger Management was discussed. If you are unable to make it to Caregiver Night, but would like the information from the evening, please call us and we can send it to you. Our second Caregiver Night was held on October 25th and it was Family Game Night where we played Halloween-themed games. We had another great turn out!

As always, if you or your student are in need of support at home or community resource referrals, please let us know!

~Molly McFarland, School Social Worker

Staff Recognition

On October 22nd Gail Klimek (Alpha School's Transition Specialist) completed his first Ironman event!! Pictured here, Terri Stevens (one of Alpha School's Administrative Assistants) hi-fives Mr. Klimek as he runs down Front Street in Wilmington, NC. Alpha School is proud of Mr. Klimek for his hard work and impressive accomplishment!

Photo courtesy of the Wilmington Star News Online.