

**Mt. Whitney
Highest Summit
in the Contiguous
United States
14,497 feet**

The Inyo Insight

An Education Newsletter from the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools
Volume 8, Issue 4 www.inyo.k12.ca.us January, 2016

Building Brain Compatible Classrooms

COUNTYWIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY: FEBRUARY 29TH

On February 29th, Dr. Kenneth Wesson will present the latest findings in the neuroscience of learning to all Inyo County teachers at our Countywide Professional Development Day. Dr. Wesson will discuss what implications current research has for classroom teachers.



Dr. Kenneth Wesson

Dr. Wesson is a former university-level faculty member and administrator, who works as a keynote speaker and consultant for pre-school through university-level

institutions and organizations. He speaks throughout the world about neuroscience and methods for creating classrooms and learning environments that are "brain-considerate." In addition to his speeches on the neuroscience of learning, Wesson speaks on the subjects of early brain development, design and engineering, STEM and STREAM, contextual learning, and curriculum development. Dr. Wesson has also published articles on a variety of topics related to

neuroscience and learning.

We are pleased to welcome such an esteemed speaker to our February, countywide, professional development day!

*"If it's your job to
develop the mind,
shouldn't you know
how the brain
works?"
- Kenneth Wesson*

Educational Technology Mini- Grant Opportunity

Do you have ideas about ways to enhance classroom instruction with technology, but need some additional hardware or software, or perhaps a paid subscription, to make it happen? If the answer is yes, check out this terrific mini-grant opportunity!

This winter ICSOS is offering Inyo County's TK-12 classroom teachers grants of up to \$2000 per teacher to fund technology that supports teaching and learning. Mini-grants will be available to individual teachers only, rather than teacher teams.

To apply, teachers must submit a simple grant application via Google Docs/Drive. In accepting funding, grantees agree to submit a brief report at the end of the school year.

GRANT GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION: <https://goo.gl/xvkyEi>

GRANT APPLICATION: <https://goo.gl/pccoZ0>

Writing Contest Results

The 5th Inyo County Writing Contest for middle school

students was held in October. Participating students from five different school districts were charged with writing an article about living in Inyo County. Students were asked to imagine that, as a local business owner or director of a large organization, they would need to attract potential employees to Inyo County. Students accessed an ICSOS-generated website that housed resources the students could use in researching their piece: an article entitled "10 Ways Growing Up In A Small

*"When you are in Inyo County you can have a feeling of security in your schools and at home."
- Mark McAlister, Owens Valley School*

Town Prepared You For Life," links to several websites, and a video interview with Tawni Thomson, executive director of the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce. In the articles, students highlighted the proximity of Inyo County to National Parks, the area's rich cultural heritage, and the vast variety of recreational opportunities. Many of the students echoed the thoughts of Kylee Jorgensen when she said:

" [Inyo County] can surely

be a place you can call home. With its small schools and community you are certain to develop long lasting friendships..."

ICSOS received over 60 entries and there were many fine pieces of work. The following students were honored as finalists this year and their work appeared in the November 19th edition of the Sierra Reader:

**Bodie Bedore
Mark McAlister
Rachel Fitt
Spencer Reid
Annika Foote
Laura Watterson
Scott Hennarty
Lauren Wesling**

**Kylee Jorgensen
Jordan Winzenread**

Since practicing the hard work of writing leads to academic success, all participating students and teachers deserve congratulations.

If you have any questions or comments about the writing contest, please contact Ilissa Twomey (itwomey@icsos.us) or 760-873-3262 ext. 2197.

*The websites from the past two years are available for classroom use to guide students through the writing process or as practice for the Smarter Balanced performance tasks. [Manzanar Writing Task](#) [Living in Inyo County Writing Task](#)

Universal Access Tools Training

Last spring California's students and teachers experienced the new online testing system that will be used to assess students' mastery of the Common Core Standards for the foreseeable future. The system continues to evolve, notably with the addition of interim assessments, the Digital Library, and a wide variety of universal access tools embedded

in the Smarter Balanced assessments.

This winter, ICSOS Curriculum & Instruction staff will be offering our sites an opportunity to participate in a one-hour workshop to deepen teachers' and principals' understanding of the new system and assessment options. The workshop will delve into the components of the

assessment system, how to interpret and use assessment data (particularly claim level data), and the three levels of supports available to students as they take the new test. ICSOS staff will present the workshop at school sites by administrators' request.

For more information, contact Lo Lyness at llyness@icsos.us or 873-3262 ext 2103.

Read With Me

PROMOTING LITERACY IN THE OWENS VALLEY

ICSOS and Altrusa of the Eastern Sierra have partnered to bring a volunteer-based literacy program to Inyo County. *Read With Me* is designed to: share the joy of reading; foster lifelong readers; support literacy development; and expand students' home library.

Currently, there are over 20 volunteers serving 25 students with more volunteers ready to be placed. Those interested in volunteering attend a brief orientation and then are scheduled to read aloud, one-on-one with students in 20 - 30 minute sessions. The time volunteers spend with students is much like reading a bedtime story to a child: relaxed, informal and fun! Twice per month students choose a book to take home. Participating students are excited to read with their buddies and enjoy choosing books to take home.

Many of our adult volunteers report that they enjoy the reading sessions as much as—if not more than—the children! Diane Doonan of Range & River books eloquently describes some of the many advantages of volunteering and the effect on students: "...the best way to feel optimistic about the future is to get to know some wonderful children, especially if you know they can face the world with strong reading skills."

If you are a K-3 teacher and would like to learn more about the program, please contact Ilissa Twomey (itwomey@icsos.us) or 760-873-3262 ext. 2197.

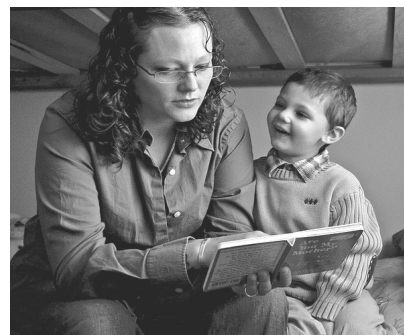


Photo credit: Bread for the World via Foter.com / CC BY-NC-ND

Upcoming Student Events

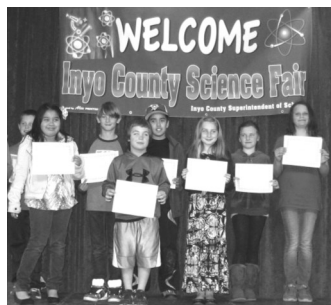
January 21 (Thurs), 6 pm:

40th Annual Inyo County Spelling Bee
Location: Jill Kinmont Boothe School



February 10 (Wed), 6 pm:

Inyo County Science Fair
Location: Tri-County Fairgrounds, Home Economics Building



March 10 (Thurs), 6 pm:

Speech Contest
Location: Jill Kinmont Boothe School

March 24 (Thurs), 6 pm

Geography Contest
Location: Jill Kinmont Boothe School

Tech Corner: Apps for Students

Here are three apps you and your students might find useful:

1. **Google Keep:** Easy sticky notes and to-do lists follow you anywhere

Google's personal organizer lets you create sticky notes and to-do lists that can be shared with others by entering names or e-mail addresses. Students can share notes with each other and teachers can share notes with students. Users can organize their notes with labels to group them together. Add a reminder

to a Google Keep note to call your attention to a note at a certain time.

2. **Make slideshows interactive with Nearpodize this!**

This Chrome extension turns your Google slides into an interactive presentation, just like the app Nearpod. The teacher controls how quickly to advance through slides as students follow along on their devices. Nearpod provides interactive elements such as quizzes and

polls that allow students to respond and interact with the presentation on their own devices, as the teacher views their responses.

3. **Hemingway App:** Help students improve the mechanics of their writing with the free Hemingway Editor app. Students copy and paste their text into the app, which analyzes their writing for wordy sentences, passive voice, and unnecessarily long words. The app highlights questionable sentences and words, and shows the grade level of the writing.