

News Page Design

2012 KSPA State Contest

Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your newspaper is a biweekly with the next edition to come out May 20. Your editor has asked you to design page five, where you feature your in-depth stories.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a **carry-in** contest.

Please attach **your assigned contest number** in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your entry.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.

Assignment

You will find a story on the following pages and on the Web.

It is a long story about arts education funding cuts at Ad Astra. You may edit it down slightly if you need it to fit a space, but you should use at least 75 percent of the story. That means it should be a major part of your layout.

The photos and other elements that you choose to add (including headlines) should work to complement each other in a cohesive single-issue layout. Good luck.

* For story and photo download instructions see page 3.

Specifications

Using the available story and photos (see download instructions on Web site), design page 5, where you always place special issue-oriented features. You may design a special page-header (such as "INDEEP" or "THE STAR REPORT") that would indicate that this is a standing feature. The page should include folio information as well as the stories and corresponding photo(s) you see fit to include. Designers may add illustrative art, mug shots or other graphics not included among the available photos to enhance overall design. You will have to write your own headlines for the stories.

The newspaper must be designed as a tabloid, 17 inches deep by 11 inches wide. The designer may determine the number of columns. Entries must be computer-generated and may be submitted in color, or black and white. Entries must be printed on a single 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of paper, reduced to fit.

Other Specifications

Photos should be cropped, cut out, and enlarged or reduced to fit the design plan.

You may edit stories down slightly if you need it to fit a space, but you should use at least 75 percent of each.

The headline and other subheadlines (internal and/or atop the story) should suggest the content of the story and should be designed in exactly the size, style and location you want.

You may use the cutlines provided on page 2 of these instructions.



Analysis by Bud Tuglee Star Sports Editor

Betty Draper has gotten used to the screams and squeals that greet her every day.

Draper holds a near-celebrity status at Ad Astra for a simple reason: She's the music teacher.

"They're always so excited," Draper said after a recent school day. "The students love their art classes. Because they get joy from them."

Despite her popularity with students, Draper — like other music teachers across the city, state and country — fears her job may not exist next year. Amid budget cuts and an all-consuming focus on raising math and reading test scores, the arts have increasingly been pushed to the side despite their demonstrated academic and social benefits.

In Kansas, where a tradition of delegating decisions to individual schools and school districts holds sway, students' access to the musical arts varies widely — and often depends on parent fundraising. "If your school has money or if you have a principal who's a real proponent of the arts, then you get it," Draper said. "And if you're not in one of those two groups, then you don't."

More than 20 percent of the state's public high schools fall into the latter category, according to an internal school-district survey released by the Kansas State Department of Education. About half of middle- and high-school students are enrolled in a music class, according to the survey.

In general, white students in wealthy areas are more likely to have access.

Aspera Public Schools officials recently received a \$1 million grant from The Wallace Foundation to confront that reality.

The money comes with a January 2013 deadline for the district to develop a district-wide arts curriculum — essentially, minimum requirements for visual arts, music, dance and theater — as well as strategies to enlist support from principals and community partners.

But the effort, the latest in a string of attempts to improve the district's arts program, faces challenges — including uncertainty about where to get funding to implement any plan.

"I appreciate that they're doing it, I appreciate that they're getting input, but oh my goodness," said Peggy Olson, a parent who attended a meeting soliciting community input on the plan last week. "We have so far to go."

The process comes as local arts advocates say

the widely debated focus on measurable outcomes in public education is starting to endanger after-school programs.

The list of organizations qualified to receive funding through Aspera's \$23.2 million Families and Education Levy, released earlier this month, did not include any arts groups — mostly because the nine that applied don't closely track their statistical effect on academic achievement.

Mayor Joan Holloway has promised to maintain funding to the organization most affected by the move, Music and Arts Corps (MAC), but the group's executive director called the city's focus on stats demoralizing.

"It felt like a real step backwards," said Megan Whitford.

When Roger Sterling moved to Aspera as a fifth-grader, he suffered from a debilitating lack of self-esteem. It was so bad, he said, that he "probably wouldn't have even had the confidence to pick up the phone."

Seven years later, Sterling is an 18-year-old senior at Ad Astra with a 3.6 GPA and an interest in medicine. He credits his success to a break-dancing class that helped his confidence. Soon, he was playing guitar in a school band, and then in a neighborhood group.

"If it weren't for my performing arts classes her at Ad Astra, I don't know if I'd still be in school," Sterling said. "Art has allowed me to continue my academic career."

Madonna Gaga has lived in Aspera her whole life, but as the child of a single mother who works two jobs just to keep the family in its mobile home, Madonna never dreamed she'd be on the verge of a career in the performing arts.

But when Gaga arrived at Ad Astra her freshman year, she enrolled in a band class with Draper and quickly showed why she now can dream.

"I was ready to quit school and go to work to make sure my mom didn't have to work so hard," said Gaga, now a junior. "But my guidance counselor put me in this class, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Gaga's second piano caught the attention of the teacher, and Gaga entered a state competition, where she earned first place. Since then, she's been able to parlay her work into a spot singing regularly

at the Aspera Coffee Shop downtown. She wants to major in music at the University of Kansas.

Sterling's and Gaga's stories are not unique.

Research shows arts education can help foster many skills, from self-expression to problem-solving, said Leslie Gore, an educational-psychology professor at the University of Kansas.

Gore said social and emotional learning is critical to child development, but it is being minimized because it is hard to measure.

In addition, many education advocates argue that math and reading should be the focus of school, especially in low-income areas, because they are basic skills required for adult life.

State Sen. Burt Cooper, R-Aspera, Earhart County, said music should not be considered a part of basic education, though he does not doubt its potential power.

Few people do.

So if it's so popular, why is music education so limited and uneven in Kansas, and why does Aspera have to fight for its arts dollars?

The answer, school-district employees say, dates back to 1975, when the district suffered a double levy failure. Among other responses, officials cut the district-wide arts program and reduced discretionary funding given to principals — money often spent on music education.

Officials never restored that funding, said Layne Price, the district's top academic officer.

Schools still receive some discretionary money but, depending on how many students they have, it's often only enough for two or three extra staffers. A physical-education teacher is required. That leaves principals to decide between hiring a music teacher or a full-time librarian, a reading specialist or any number of other options.

Parent groups have stepped in to help, creating widely different arts experiences for students.

Some elementary schools have multiple music teachers or artists-in-residence. The two high schools have special outside programs in orchestra (Ad Astra) or jazz (John Brown) paid for by hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations. And, according to the internal survey, some elementary and middle schools have no certified music teacher at all.

The problems are not unique to Aspera,

said Harry Reasoner of the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Banks cited a recent statewide survey that found that 63 percent of Kansas principals are dissatisfied with music instruction in their schools.

Several districts have cut music in response to state budget cuts over the past three years, she said.

Music education suffered less in Aspera than in other areas, officials said. In fact, the district's programs are in relatively good shape compared to neighboring districts, several of which reported not employing a single music-focused staffer in their central offices.

The director of Aspera's arts program doesn't think that's anything to brag about.

Peter Campbell came to the district in July 2007 as part of a partnership with City Hall. His mission: to create a comprehensive K-12 arts curriculum — a need that intensified with a new assignment plan that pushes students toward the school closest to them rather than allowing them to choose among a variety of schools.

"We need to be able to make some guarantees to our families at every school," Campbell said.

The Wallace Foundation grant represents his best chance yet. But it's a daunting task, Campbell admitted.

A similar effort in Wichita, also funded by The Wallace Foundation, took 10 years to complete, she said.

And even if the planning is accomplished here, there's no guarantee there will be money to fund it. Campbell is hoping the Wallace Foundation will follow up with more funding but can't count on it.

Those that recognize the challenges include Aspera School Board Vice President Kay Smith-Blum, who said, "It's always interesting when we do a lot of talking and then somebody tries to translate it into something."

But music education advocates said they're confident that, after decades of fragmentation, they can do it.

"This can be done, but it's going to take time," said Michael Schmidt, a music teacher at South Plains K-8. "We're going to have to build it. But eventually it's going to be awesome."

Photo Captions

Photo #1: FLOWERS

Ashlyn Brown, junior, arranges flowers for the second annual arts festival. Music teacher Betty Draper organized the event to help raise funding for Ad Astra arts programs. The flowers were solicited to AAHS parents and local business for \$15 each and given to AAHS visual and performing arts students during the finale of the festival.

Photo #2: CLARINETS

Ad Astra clarinet-playing students perform during the annual Aspera Holiday Festival. This year, each section of the band took center stage for an individual performance.

Photo #3: VIOLIN

Carolyn Turney, junior, poses with her violin. Due to arts education funding cuts, Turney is no longer able to take violin classes at AAHS. "Violin is my passion, so when I heard violin classes were no longer going to be offered at Ad Astra, I was extremely disappointed," Turney said. "Now I have to take private violin lessons by myself and without my classmates."

Photo #4: STAGE

Jason Belly, sophomore, receives flowers from the crowd during his performance at the second annual AAHS arts festival. "The festival was completely student-generated, with the help of Mrs. Draper, of course," Belly said. "We couldn't have raised what little money we did without her."

Photo #5: SINGER

Jason Crumple, senior, sings solo during his performance during the annual Aspera Holiday Festival. "It sucks that funds have been cut," Crumple said. "But no matter what, I'm going to keep on singing."

Photo #6: SAXOPHONE

The saxophone players in the AAHS band prepare for their first performance since the arts education budget cuts. "Music may have been hurt the least, but all arts are important," Rob Christie, band director, said. "We felt it was extremely important to help Mrs. Draper with the arts festival so the integrity of all arts can be saved."

Instructions for Downloading Contest Photos and Stories

1. Go to the following address: <http://www.kspaonline.org/state/carry-ins/>
2. Scroll down to find the section designated for Newspaper Design. There is one story and six photos.
3. Click and download the story file by clicking on the "12 State NP Design Story" link.
4. Click on a photo link to open the full-size image.
5. If you use a PC, RIGHT CLICK on the photo and then SAVE PICTURE AS . . . (or) If you use a MAC, hold the CONTROL button while you click on the photo, then SAVE IMAGE AS.
6. Repeat steps 3-4 until all appropriate photos have been saved to your computer.