



Excellence: Heartland students sign Academic Letters of Intent to the colleges from which they have received academic scholarships. The signing was a first of its kind in a multi-state area.

A note from the Superintendent ...

We appreciate your continued support!

The 2016-2017 academic year is behind us and once again it is time for us to provide our patrons with a school district annual report. We are very proud of the many accomplishments our students have achieved along with the help of teachers, staff members, parents, and our communities.

Much of the data that we use to measure progress is included in this Annual Report. You will find information on student achievement, demographics of the school district, along with financial information. I encourage you to review the report to become more

familiar with our school district. With your help we will be able to achieve our mission of a quality education for each and every student.

You may also review the progress of education across the state on the Nebraska Department of Education's website at <http://nep.education.ne.gov>. This site is dedicated to facts about public education in Nebraska and contains additional information specific to Heartland.

Thank You!

If you have children in the Heartland schools, we hope that you are involved in their education as a partner with their teachers.

If you reside within our district, but your children are all out of school, there are plenty of ways to stay involved.

If you know those who are attending elsewhere, but live within our district, have them revisit and "come home" to a great, small-town, progressive district that is Heartland Community Schools.

Thank you for your continued support and feel free to stop in the office at any time.

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Annual Report



2016-17

Heartland Community School District, sixty miles west of Lincoln, formed when the Henderson Community School and Bradshaw Public School districts consolidated in 1998-99. Heartland Community School is dedicated to educating all students by providing challenging opportunities to learn according to individual needs. Heartland is a family-friendly district that offers rigorous academic standards and achievement and outstanding fine arts and extra-curricular activities and facilities.

Who Is Heartland?

We proudly serve families in the Bradshaw and Henderson areas and beyond.

1. Our enrollment is steady!

As many smaller districts across the state are seeing plummeting enrollments, ours has held steady over the last number of years. This enables us to continue to offer a wide choice of programs.

2. Our staff puts students first!

Even an outside agency noticed that our staff focuses on what is best for kids. It is our daily mission.

3. Our facilities and technology are awesome!

Many updates to the facilities create an enjoyable atmosphere in which to learn. Laptops for students and other technology will be updated for 2018-19.

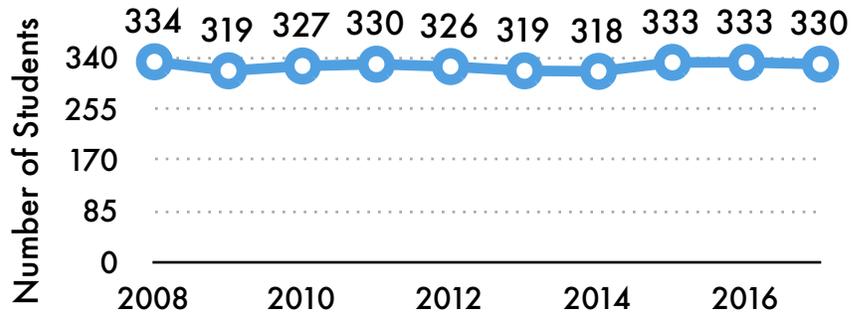
4. We have a wide variety of offerings and are always looking for ways to improve!

Our students have access to a solid list of course offerings from our staff in addition to online and interactive video conferencing. We also have a number of students involved in earning college credits and experiences through a career academy.

5. Our communities are actively involved and supportive of the school!

We are blessed to have such supportive families in Henderson and Bradshaw. Being actively involved with and supportive of the school is critical in a child's development. We enjoy this partnership!

ENROLLMENT: The enrollment at Heartland Community Schools has leveled over the last few years.



An independent study found Heartland to be “Impressive”

AdvancED is the global leader in providing continuous improvement and accreditation services to over 32,000 institutions serving 20 million students worldwide. A team of trained experts visited our school for two days in March and analyzed nearly a dozen different areas, from the effectiveness of our teaching to leadership.

Scores were based upon standardized measures from personal interviews, observations of teaching, and data collections. The external evaluators found that Heartland exceeded the average scores from their large network of schools in nearly every domain. They commented that it is very rare for a school to exceed the averages in this number of areas. Most schools are above in some areas and below in multiple others.

Powerful Practices Identified At Heartland

- The staff is invested in the lives and success of the student body.
- The school offers students robust and varied courses with differentiated learning opportunities, including early childhood programming with support for students with special education needs, and various extra-curricular activities.
- The community is actively involved with and supportive of the school.

New Programs and Updates

Through our curriculum development process, which typically takes a full year per subject, we have recently evaluated and updated every core subject. Studying student data to see if the changes have increased student learning is a critical piece of this evaluation. So far, the changes have produced positive results.

2013 Reading Curriculum
2013 New Technology
2015 Math Curriculum
2016 Science Curriculum
2017 Soc. Studies Curriculum
2018 Health Curriculum
2018 New Technology

Much of our hands-on technology is ending its useful lifespan, so we are looking to update our student and teacher laptops for the 2018-19 school year. All students in grades 7-12 receive a laptop to aid in the learning process. iPads provide learning activities and reading assessments “on the fly” for students in grades PK-6.

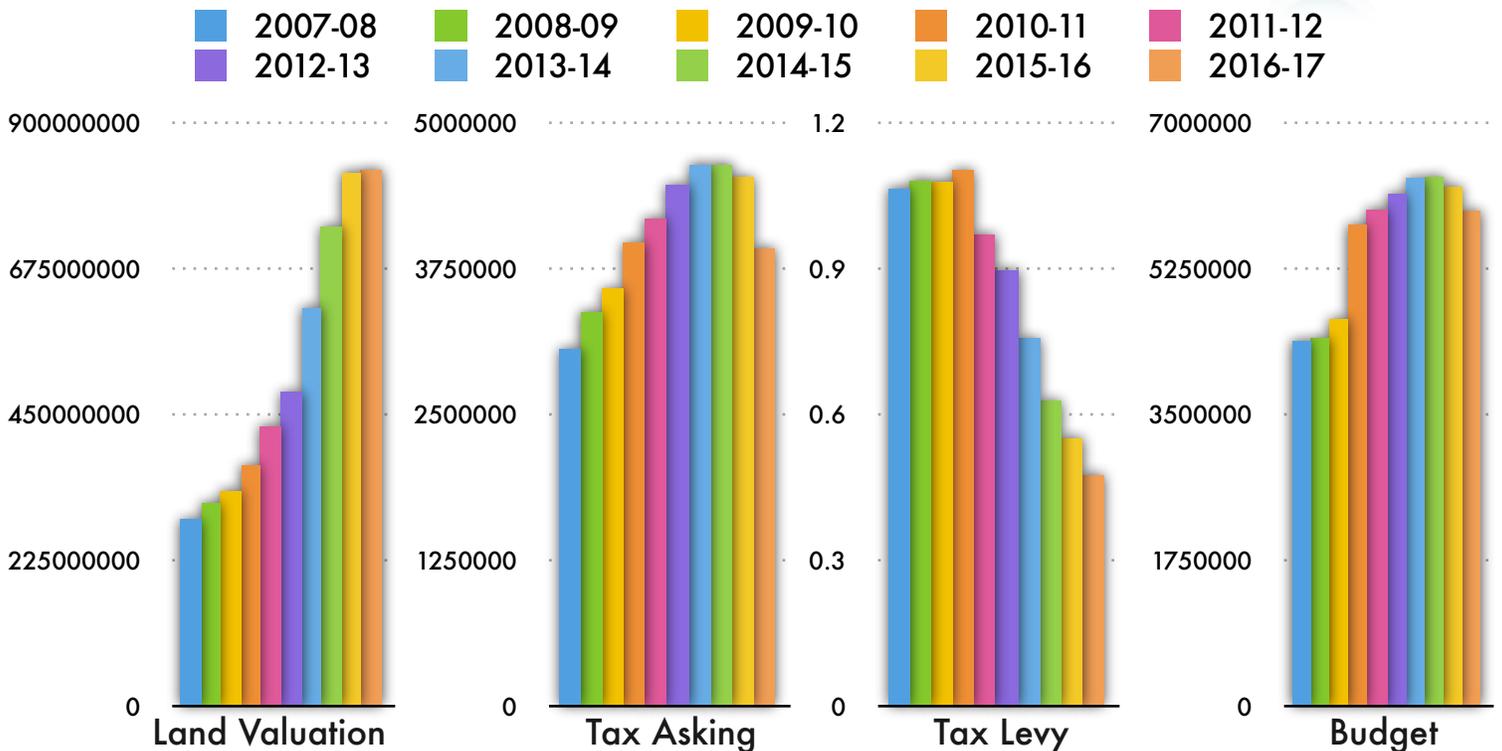
Facility & Program Updates

Curriculum	Facilities	Future
New Reading Program 1:1 Laptops & iPads New Math Program New Science Program New Social Studies Program Development of Curriculum Guides Expansion of Course Offerings Addition of Automated Equipment in Industrial Arts	Remodeled North Gym New Sound & Lighting in Theater Updates to Furniture Updates to Carpet AC in all Classrooms Libraries Remodeled Updates to the Track Courtyards Remodeled to Outdoor Learning	Replace Band Uniforms Updates to Technology Update Fire Alarm System Phone & Intercom System Update Electrical Service Vehicle Updates as Needed Replace Doors and Windows Concrete Work
Transportation	HVAC Units Bus Barn Field Storage Shed Replaced Doors & Windows	
Activity Buses Route Buses Small Vehicles		

Fiscal Responsibility

While land values increased sharply, we have decreased our tax asking 3 years in a row in consideration of our patrons. Our levy has decreased from \$1.10 in 2010-11 to just \$0.47 in 2016-17.

Our budget for 2016-17 was at a level last seen in 2011-12.



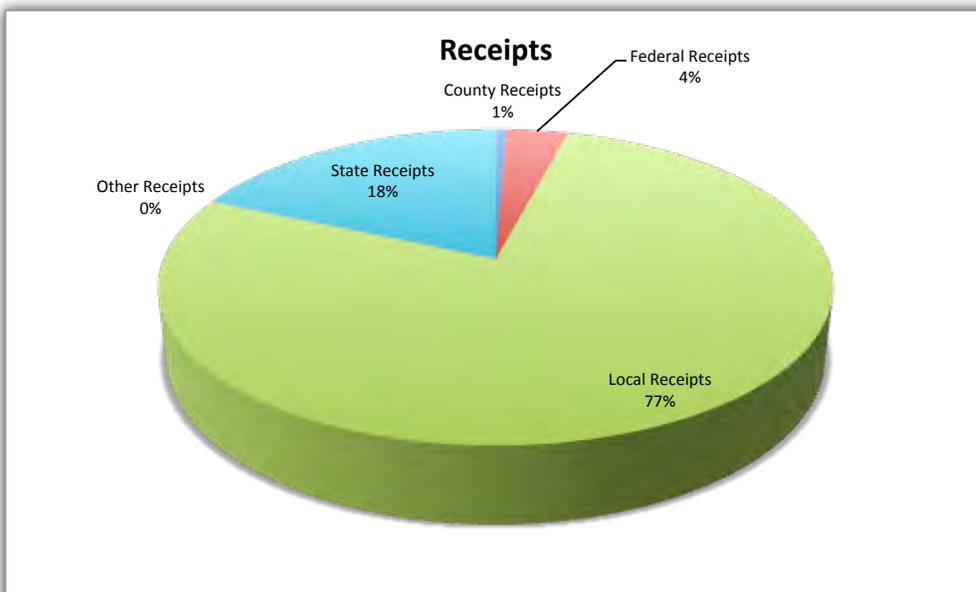
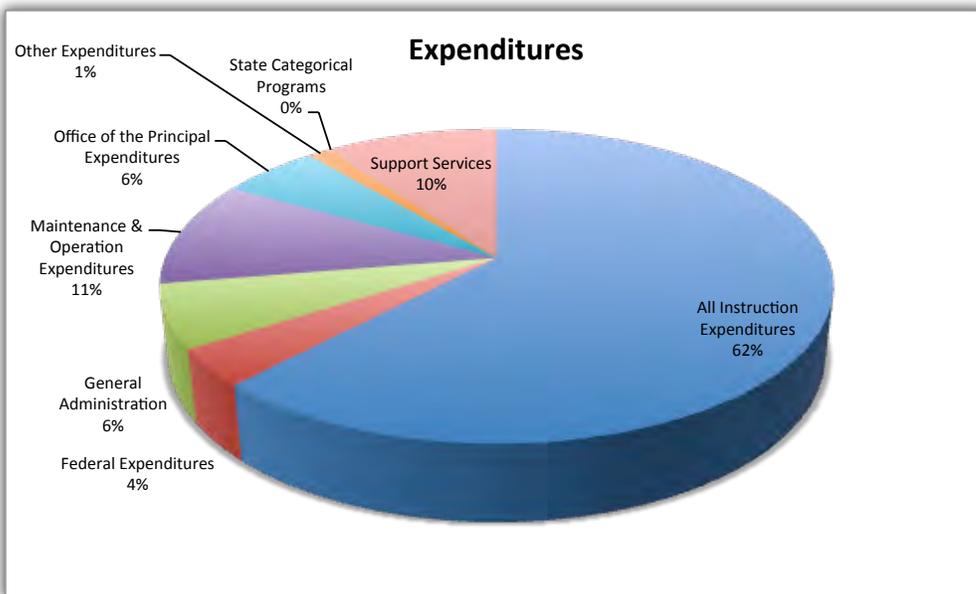
School Finances

Tax dollars are a very important resource for school districts in their efforts to educate children. Nebraska schools receive taxes and other receipts from local, county, state, and federal sources. As you look at the information included in this report, you will notice that the great majority of the dollars used to fund education in our district are generated by local tax dollars. The other resources are necessary yet they are small by comparison.

As you can see from the financial graphs on the following pages, we have worked to keep spending low while providing for a quality education for our students. Going into the 2016-17 school year, the amount of tax dollars that we asked for actually decreased once again from the year prior.

Many of the building and curriculum updates are financed via our depreciation fund, which cannot be utilized for salaries or operating expenses.

The Heartland Community Schools rest on a solid financial foundation and we appreciate the support of tax dollars and realize the care with which we need to take in our asking for this funding.



Trends:

School finance is a state funding issue, not a local taxing issue. In the 1998-99 school year, Heartland received \$576,000 in state aid. In 2016-17, we received \$0.

Land Values

Up 92%



Tax Asking

Down 6.2%



Tax Levy

Down 51%



Total Budget

Down 3.4%



We Are Very Fortunate!

Having updated facilities, equipment for teaching, and modern curriculum resources are all important for a progressive learning environment.

You can see by the list of projects on the previous page that we are fortunate to be in a healthy fiscal position.

The majority of these projects were paid for out of our depreciation and special building funds.

We have been able to complete these projects and plan those on the horizon all while lowering our tax asking each of the last 3 years.



Student Assessment

Teachers study student data in order to make adjustments in their teaching.

English / Language Arts

The state has once again changed the English test. The new assessment is much more difficult than in prior years. Our students' averages were low compared to other subjects, but still well above the state averages.

Mathematics

Math has seen a change in curriculum in the last couple of years and we are beginning to see gains by our students. In the elementary, nearly 100% of our students are proficient. Overall, 1 or 2 students per class are below the proficiency level.

Science

Science has been an area of focus for us over the last few years and the results are starting to show. Our students are well above the state averages on state standards and the ACT test.

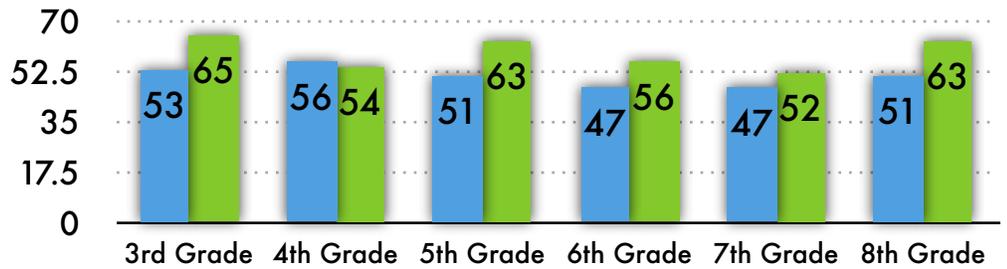
ACT Test

All juniors in the state of Nebraska took the ACT test this year. Our percentage of students meeting the state standard exceeded the state average by as many as 30+ percentage points. Our average ACT scale score was 20.4 compared to the state average of 18.6.

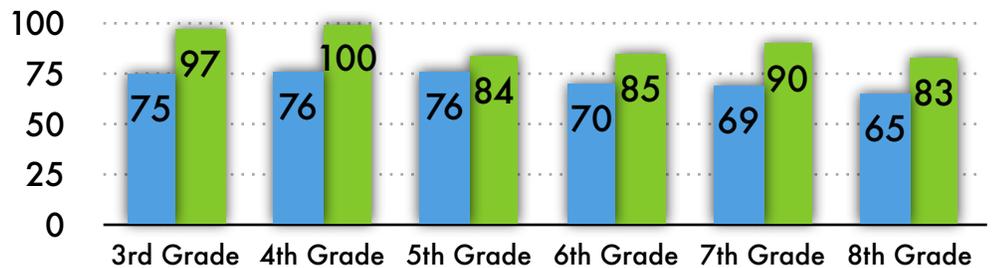
Graphs show the percentage of students deemed to be proficient on the state standards in each subject area.

■ State ■ Heartland

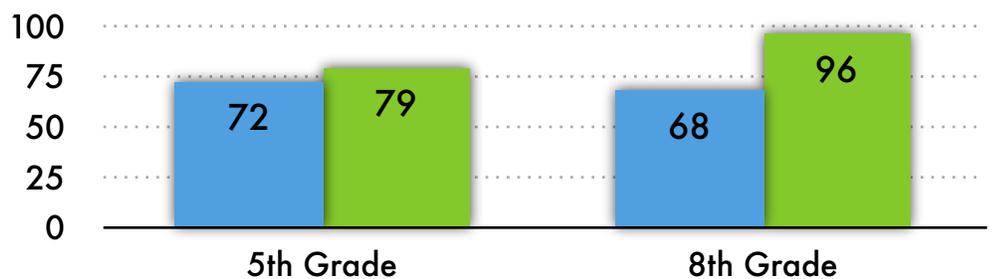
English/Language Arts



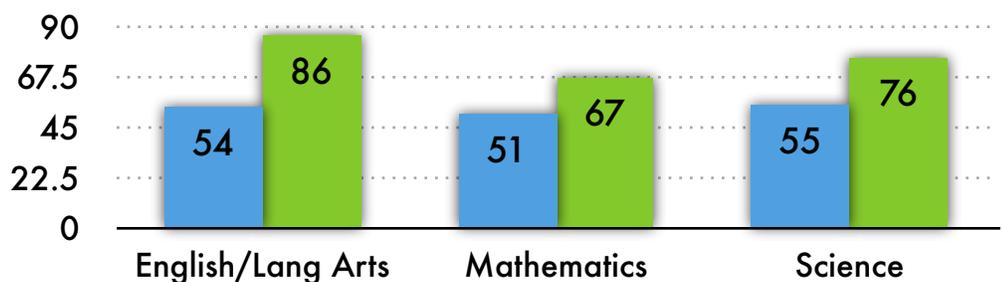
Mathematics



Science



ACT Test



Check Us Out Online!



Keep updated on everything from current news and archived stories to lunch menus and instructional strategies on our school district website:

<http://www.heartlandschools.org>

On Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/heartlandcommunityschools>

On Twitter:

@hcsdogpound #heartlandhuskies

Other Highlights ...

The Huskie Beef Program

In the fall of 2016, Heartland started a program to introduce locally raised and processed, high-quality beef into our student lunch program. Through the generous donations of animals and processing fees, the students enjoy this beef 2-3 times each week.



The savings realized in our hot lunch program will be used to expand offerings in the lunchroom, update the environment, and educate students on new foods to try. Another large part of the program is to educate students on how the beef reaches their plate by visiting farms during planting and harvest as well as the feedlot.

Technology is Showing Up Everywhere

While all students in grades 7-12 are issued laptops, we have also enhanced our technology opportunities in other curricular areas. In the industrial arts and agricultural science areas, students are learning to use a 3-D printer to create objects they have designed using drafting software. They also have been using an automated CNC mill which carves designs into or cuts pieces out with great precision for woodworking projects. We will be considering the addition of a computer driven laser engraver as a multi-class project with business applications.

Extra-Curricular Achievement Is Off the Charts!

We understand that successful extra-curricular experiences are part of the overall education of our students. We also understand that there is some ebb and flow from year to year, but 2016-17 was a banner year!

- Football qualified for the state playoffs.
- Conference champs in volleyball.
- Robotics and quiz bowl teams qualified for the state tournaments.
- Both basketball teams qualified for the state tournament.
- Our students and fans received the Sportsmanship Award at the girls' state basketball tournament.
- The girls' track team was conference & district champs and the boys were conference & district runners-up.
- Both golf teams qualified for the state golf tournament.
- The band earned 1st place in Classes C & D at the Applejack and Harvest of Harmony parades.
- FBLA qualified 7 students for national competition and they brought home an award for placing 7th in the nation.
- FFA qualified several students for state competition.
- An NSAA Believer and Achiever Award.

A great showing by our students and their sponsors!



Did you know ...

• Our attendance & graduation rates are higher than the state average?



• A higher percentage of our budget goes directly to instruction than the average school in Nebraska?

• Nearly 100% of our students participate in at least one extra-curricular activity?

• One third of our teachers hold Master's degrees and all teachers receive 8 full days of training each year?



• Over 90% of our graduates attend a post-secondary institution?

Academic "Letter of Intent Day"

Most of us are familiar with the athletic National Letter of Intent ceremonies held in the spring in high schools across the country. Heartland Community Schools has now added an Academic Letter of Intent ceremony for those students that also excel in the classroom. The criteria for recognition is for the student to accept a scholarship from the college they will attend that is specifically awarded for academic achievement. School officials believe that this may be the first of its kind in Nebraska.

"We are excited every year to celebrate signing day for our student athletes that will continue to participate at the collegiate level," said Superintendent Brad Best. "We are equally as excited for those students that exhibit academic excellence in the classroom. Today was a day in which we invited the students'

parents and college representatives to commemorate the hard work of these students in the classroom," he continued. While not part of the criteria, all of those recognized participated in extra-curricular activities and many will continue those experiences in college.

Language within the academic letter of intent speaks of the student's commitment to continuing their focus on excellence in the classroom and giving of their talents to the college they are attending. "They are making a public statement that they will work diligently to maintain their established pattern of academic excellence beyond high school," Best said.

Heartland officials plan to make this ceremony an annual event.



Giving Back

The staff and students of Heartland Community Schools find many ways to give back to our local communities. Here are just a few of the efforts ...

- Harvest meals for farmers.
- Food drive for the holidays that distributes nearly 1,000 items to 30 families.
- Helping with community celebrations.
- Visiting with residents at our local care center.
- Hosting a blood drive.
- Recycling.
- York County Fair volunteers.
- Highway cleanup with the Henderson Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Musical performances in both communities during the holidays.
- Spring cleanup in the city park.
- Streaming school activities over the internet for the general public.
- Re-painting a downtown building mural.
- Relay for Life volunteers.

School Board & Administration

Gary Braun
Board President

Paul Brune
Vice President

Glen Ott
Secretary

Boyd Stuhr, Jr.
Treasurer

Kent Allen
Board Member

Glenn Larson
Board Member

Brad Best
Superintendent

Tim Carr
Secondary Principal

Sadie Coffey
Elementary Principal





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Heartland Community Schools
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Courtyard Renovations



In 2012, teachers and administrators began discussions on how these spaces could be better utilized for student learning. In the summer of 2016, the school board decided to move forward with installing energy efficient glass and revitalizing the courtyards. The goal was to make these spaces enjoyable to use and aesthetically pleasing, but more importantly, to create learning spaces for our students.



- Herb and vegetable garden for the Family and Consumer Science classes.
- Feeders attract various species of birds for study of their markings and behaviors.
- The waterfall and pond area provides space for water studies. The rocks in this area hold moss and lichen colonies.
- The multitude of plants throughout the courtyard were selected for their ability to attract butterflies, bees, and other insects for study.
- Many rocks, including the stone benches, are examples of geologic formations and show signs of erosion.
- The sound of the flowing water, the many shadows and textures, and the natural sunlight provide a perfect environment for art, creative writing, and science classes.
- One area of the courtyard is tested, fertilized, and planted for crop science and horticulture studies.
- A circular area provides space to conduct outdoor experiments, including the angle and movement of the sun throughout the seasons.
- The rock garden provides examples of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks for earth science studies.



QUESTION AND EXPLORE

Learning is about questioning and exploration. It is about trying to understand the way things work independently and in harmony with one another. Exploring nature and “getting your hands dirty” allows for learning to take place on a personal level. We are hopeful that these courtyards inspire exploration and new questions on a path to a deeper understanding.

It is the policy of the Heartland Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Brad Best, Superintendent of Schools, 1501 Front St., Henderson, NE 68371, 402.723.4434, bbest@heartlandschools.net