

# Unicoi County School System News

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- > Homelessness
- > Middle School

## Message from Director Denise Brown

It is hard to believe we have completed almost fifteen weeks of school and it is time for Thanksgiving! We talk about how fast time goes, especially as we get older, and there is always something we have not got to complete. We are better served by continuing to look ahead and planning with a goal and a positive attitude. We face challenges every day personally and professionally, but we have a lot to be thankful for. I am thankful for individuals like you who give unselfishly of their time and talents to educate our children.

Thank you for your attitude and work ethic in the mist of challenges we face in education, our economy, and everyday trials. From higher standards, common core standards, new assessments, new evaluation instruments, and continuing budget issues, you have continued to keep your focus and work for our children. Your efforts do not go unnoticed and I greatly appreciate each of you. We are truly a good team! Yes, it takes all of us to accomplish what we are doing and will continue to do for our students not only now, but in the future.

During our professional development on November 2, it was evident that with a positive attitude and by working together, we demonstrated the commitment to our students. I wanted to share some of the positive comments from our professional development day.

“We are in this together”, “What each and every teacher is doing affects the evaluation of other teachers”, “Growth mindset- what I can’t do now – I can do if I work at it”, “Everyone was engaged in the activities”, “Making new connections with colleagues”, “We did the presentations, not an outsider who does not know about real classrooms”, “Morning session was very good – set the tone”, “Teachers cannot be successful at D.I. if they do not know their students well”, “The positive attitude and desire to improve our instruction”.

This is very evident that combining determination with a positive outlook will make the future a much brighter place. Regardless of the challenges we face, personally or professionally, we have the right focus. **OUR STUDENTS!** We have an unbelievable amount of change from the federal and state levels, but we will keep our focus on our students.

In closing, thank you for what you do each and every day for students! May your November be a time to reflect on the many blessings we all have and a time to enjoy your family, rest, and reflect on your blessings. God Bless each of you!

## Upcoming Events:

Thanksgiving Holiday  
November 24, 25, 26

End of Course Tests  
December 7-9

## Did you know?

Students at the High School can bring personal computers to use in class and during lunch.

Netbook computers are available for rental from the Information Technology Class in the lunch room starting in January.

**Social Networking**

## My Face Place Space



Social networking sites allow users to connect to other users and communicate. Two years ago the technology department held a series of classes on social networking for parents, much has changed since that time. Myspace was the social networking site of choice and now Facebook has become the system used by most people.

Facebook is a large, free social networking site. To use Facebook you must register using your email address, name, birthdate, gender, and create a password. Facebook current has more than 500 million users. If it were a country it would be the third largest in the world. 73% of twelve to 17 year olds have at least one social networking profile. More than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) are shared on Facebook each month.

**Facebook is a large, free social networking site.**

Facebook is not supposed to be used by children under thirteen. There is not a easy way to verify age on the site. If Facebook discovers a user under thirteen they will delete the profile. Facebook allows users to do many things such as status updates, play games, chat with others, and comments on other peoples posts. Parents hear stories about teens misusing the site and fear that their children could get caught up in problems stemming from Facebook. The problem is not with the site but the way that it is used. It is very important for parents to monitor their child activity online. Children feel social pressures to use Facebook. If used correctly it can be a useful and fun tool.

This and other useful source for information is (<http://www.common sense media.org/facebook-parents>)

## Busing tips



- Have your children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so that they won't drop things along the way.
- Have them wear bright, contrasting colors so they will be more easily seen by drivers. Make sure they leave home on time so they can walk to the bus stop and arrive before the bus is due. Running can be dangerous.
- Walk your young child to the bus stop and have older children walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.
- Practice good pedestrian behavior. Your children should walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, they should stay out of the street.
- If they must walk in the street, they should walk single file, face traffic and stay as close to the edge of the road as they can.
- Tell your child to stop and look left, right and then left again if they must cross the street. They should do the same thing at driveways and alleys. Exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so your child knows you are looking left, right and left.
- Don't let your child play running games or push and shove at the bus stop. It is dangerous near traffic.
- Make sure your child stands at least 10 feet (5 giant steps) from the road while waiting for the bus. The child will then be out of the way of traffic. Have younger children practice taking 5 giant steps to become familiar with 10 feet.
- Warn children that if they drop something, they should never pick it up. Instead, they should tell the driver and follow the driver's instructions. If they bend over to pick up a dropped object, they might not be seen by the driver and could be hurt if the driver pulls away from the stop.



## The Homeless: Who Are They? Why are the Numbers Sure to Increase?

Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the poverty rate in the U.S. increased to 14.3% in 2009, up from 13.2% in 2008. The poverty rate for U.S. children increased to 20.7%. Approximately 8.8 million families lived in poverty in the U.S. in 2009. Families living in poverty are at higher risk of becoming homeless. Read the report to learn more: [\*Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009.\*](#)



### Children experiencing homelessness:

- Are sick four times more often than other children.
- Go hungry at twice the rate of other children.
- Have high rates of obesity due to nutritional deficiencies.

Have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems compared to non-homeless children.

Families experiencing homelessness are under considerable stress. They move frequently and many are doubled-up in overcrowded apartments with relatives or friends. Others sleep in cars and campgrounds or send their children to stay with relatives to avoid shelter life. Once in shelter, families must quickly adjust to overcrowded, difficult, and uncomfortable circumstances. Despite the efforts of dedicated staff, many shelters are noisy, chaotic, and lack privacy. Homelessness increases the likelihood that families will separate or dissolve, which may compound the stress the family feels.

Are typically comprised of a mother in her late twenties with two children.

84% of families experiencing homelessness are female-headed.

42% of children in homeless families are under age six.

More than half of all homeless mothers do not have a high school diploma.

29% of adults in homeless families are working.

Have much higher rates of family separation than other low-income families.

The impact of homelessness on mothers is profound. Many are sad, fearful, and hopeless. Mothers who are homeless have been victims of interpersonal violence. For them, the experience of homelessness is another major stressor layered on other traumas. Over 92% have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime. Mothers experiencing homelessness struggle with mental health issues. Mothers often are in poor physical health.

Families who have experienced homelessness have much higher rates of family separation than other families. Some separations are dictated by the shelter system.

The information for this article was taken from: [www.familyhomelessness.org](http://www.familyhomelessness.org).





## Middle School News and Information



### SNOW!

Winter is almost here and so are the colder temperatures that come with it. The students of Unicoi County Middle School would like to help take some of the sting out of winter by taking part in Coats 4 Kids, a program to provide warm coats to Unicoi County Intermediate School students who may not be able to buy one this year. We would like for anyone who has a new or gently used coat to donate to bring it to the UCMS office between November 15, 2010 and December 13, 2010. The coats will be given to UCIS students in time for Winter Break!

Christmas is just around the corner, so we would like to take this opportunity to ask you to remember the folks in our community who may not be as fortunate as others. To this end, we would like for you to consider bringing non-perishable food items to be donated to a local food pantry in lieu of teacher gifts. If you would like to donate food items, please bring to the UCMS office by December 13, 2010.

Occasionally, when weather warrants, Unicoi County school officials may deem it necessary to either delay or cancel school due to unsafe travel conditions. Please watch local television or listen to local radio to hear these schedule changes. All schedule changes may also be viewed at [www.unicoischools.com](http://www.unicoischools.com). It is also very important that all students know how they will get home in the event of an early school dismissal. It is not possible for all students to call home for instructions on these very hectic days. Please review your family's plan with your student.

We have many exciting events coming up at Unicoi County Middle School. Please take note of the following items:

November 15, 2010 – December 13, 2010: Coats 4 Kids Coat Drive

November 16, 2010 “Charlotte’s Web” UCHS 1:00 p.m.

November 21, 2010 Open House 2-4 p.m.

November 22, 2010 In-School Basketball game 12:00pm.

November 24-26 – Thanksgiving Break (NO School)

