Written by Allie Maher, Daily Vidette Senior Staff
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As the season of giving is underway, temperatures drop and Unit 5 is asking the community to make a difference.

The school district is running its second annual Mitten Drive this year and asks for donations from the public. Unit 5 will be accepting new mitten, glove and hat donations for students in need until Friday, Dec. 14.

Dayna Brown, Unit 5 assistant to the superintendent, said the drive was implemented last year to supplement donated winter coats from the Normal Rotary Club.

“We are very fortunate to have a group who has donated winter coats for years, so with Normal Rotary taking care of that we wanted to play a role in helping our students,” Brown said.

“We like the idea of having a district-wide drive where we worked toward the same end.”

Last year’s Mitten Drive was very successful, she added, with Unit 5 receiving hundreds of donated, new mittens, gloves and hats.

This year there is a demand for all sizes – children and adult sizes to meet the needs of kindergarten through 12th-grade students. Brown said a “one size fits all” garment works well as it stretches to fit any size.

Brown also emphasized the correlation between weather preparation and performance in

school.

“One thing we know is that when students come to school we want them to be prepared when they’re waiting at the bus stop or walking,” Brown said, “If they come with a proper coat and mittens and hats they’re much more ready to learn when they start the day.”

In an effort to conceal the privacy of students in need, once the items are donated and collected, Unit 5 will distribute the winter accessories to students along with the donated coats from the Normal Rotary.

Though Unit 5 handles the collection and distribution of the donated items, local businesses and organizations volunteer by holding their own drive and then donating the items to Unit 5.

New mittens, gloves and hats can be dropped off at any Unit 5 school or at the Unit 5 District office located at 1809 W. Hovey in Normal. For further information, call (309) 557-4032. For a list of Unit 5 schools and locations, visit www.unit5.org.