Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools

February, 2026 Newsletter

Dear Parents,

I hope you have enjoyed the first month of 2026. May you have the best of luck with your New Year's Resolutions.

The students and teachers have been very busy at Hartington-Newcastle Elementary completing NWEA MAP testing in grades 3-6. The results of this mid-year testing allow teachers to analyze student's current levels of understanding. The data is used to drive the direction of instruction in order to meet the individual needs of our students and increase their success.

Box Top Collection continues! Please use the Online App to scan your receipts. If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you to everyone that has shared already.

We also continue to collect Best Choice UPC labels from all Affiliated Food Stores. Register Receipts from Foodtown are also collected. The program requires that we include the entire receipt.

Please continue to send your child to school in appropriate clothing for the weather. Nebraska weather loves to change on us and it is important that our students are appropriately dressed for their safety. Coats, snow pants, snow boots, hats and gloves are essential. I would suggest heavier gloves for recess in the snow as the light cloth gloves are quite soaked within 5 minutes of snow playing or possibly sending two pairs. Please have extra clothes in your children's book bags in case a change is needed due to wet clothes from recess: such as pants, underwear and socks. Please contact school if you need help with any of these supplies. If anyone would like to donate gloves, we are always in need. Thank you.

Please feel free to contact teachers with any questions you have about your child's learning. It is important for everyone to work together in order to create the strongest and safest learning environment possible.

Happy Valentine's Day to everyone!

Sarah Edwards, Elementary Principal

The Importance of Being Present: Why Attendance Matters

One of the simplest—but most powerful—ways we can support student success at Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools is by ensuring consistent school attendance. Being present each day truly matters, not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well.

Research and experience both show that missing multiple days of school adds up quickly. Even a few absences each month can result in gaps in learning that are difficult to fully recover. Classroom discussions, hands-on activities, group work, and teacher explanations cannot always be replicated. Over time, students who miss school more frequently are more likely to struggle academically, feel disconnected from their peers, and experience increased stress about keeping up.

Just as important, regular attendance helps students build strong habits. Learning to show up consistently, manage responsibilities, and stay committed—even when things are challenging—is a life skill that extends far beyond school. In the adult world, responsibilities don't pause because we're tired or having an "off" day, and school is one of the best places for students to begin learning that lesson in a supportive environment.

Of course, we understand that there are times when students truly need to stay home—such as when they are ill or dealing with circumstances that require it. Student health and safety always come first. At the same time, there are days when students may not feel their best but are still capable of attending school. Learning to push through those moments helps build resilience, responsibility, and confidence.

We are grateful for the partnership we share with parents and families in emphasizing the importance of attendance. Encouraging students to be at school when they can sends a clear message: education matters, effort matters, and showing up matters.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to help our students succeed—today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Corey Uldrich
7–12 Principal

NEWS FROM KEN KNEIFL

Remaining ACT Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Deadline
February 14, 2026		
April 11, 2026	March 6, 2026	March 24, 2026
April 15, 2026	*Junior ACT Test at Hartington-Newcastle Public School	
June 13, 2026	May 8, 2026	May 27, 2026
July 11, 2026	June 5, 2026	June 24, 2026

You may register for the ACT either online at www.actstudent.org. The high school code for Hartington-Newcastle Public School is 281-035.

SAT Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Deadline
March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026	March 3, 2026
May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026	April 21, 2026
June 6, 2026	May 22, 2026	May 26, 2026

The easiest way to register for the SAT is to go online at www.collegeboard.com. Again, the high school code for Hartington-Newcastle Public School is 281-035.

Students who wish to take the SAT test should be aware that we do offer the John Baylor SAT Test Prep Course. See Mr. Kneifl for further information.

College Rep Visitation Schedule

No visits are scheduled at this time. There are several visits that are in the process of being set up. Exact dates and times are not yet finalized.

Senior/Senior Parent Notes

A reminder, the FAFSA form is needed to obtain financial aid for the freshman year of college. To complete this online form both the student and one parent will need an FSA ID which will serve as your electronic signature. This FSA ID number can be obtained at fsaid.ed.gov. Each will also need their own e-mail. For the student, it is best **NOT** to use their school e-mail as this ID number will be used in future years.

The FAFSA application is free of charge. If you find that you are being charged for it, you are at the wrong site. Again, applying for the FAFSA is free of charge. * If you do not intend to complete a FAFSA you will need to sign a waiver indicating you are **NOT** completing a FAFSA. This is a graduation requirement set forth from the Nebraska Department of Education. The Department of Education states that each senior must complete a FAFSA or the waiver. Please contact the school to obtain this waiver.

Seniors are allowed two college visitation days which do not count against their attendance. Visits can be set by the family by going to the college website.

Seniors should continue for scholarship opportunities. Make sure you are aware of scholarship criteria and deadlines.

In early February, the Hartington-Newcastle Education Foundation will present several scholarship opportunities to the seniors. All seniors attending college are encouraged to fill out this application as this one application will provide several scholarship opportunities. Please seniors, make sure you are thorough with this application and make the deadline. Then, in early March, the local application will be made known to the seniors. Also, throughout the spring, there may be several other individual, local applications available to the seniors. Again, I encourage all of our seniors to apply for any and all scholarships they are eligible for.

Finally, as students are awarded scholarships, please provide Mr. Kneifl with written documentation of the awards. This is what is read at graduation and goes in the graduation program. It does not matter if the student is attending the college of which the award is made. All known documented awards are recognized at graduation.

Spring is truly a busy time for all of our students, especially it seems, for the seniors.

Juniors

Later this spring, on April 15th, the juniors will be taking the state mandated ACT test. This test will be given in school and is of no cost to the student. This test can be used in college admission, scholarship determination, and in college class placement. The juniors will go through the John Baylor ACT Test Program prior to taking this test. There will be more information coming prior to the test.

Remember, the juniors are allowed one college day which does not count against their attendance. We encourage juniors to use this opportunity to get a jump on the college decision.

NEWS FROM MR. RYAN MACHOLAN

Literacy News: The ReadBowl Challenge

The 4th grade class has officially entered the arena! This month, our 20 students are competing in **Malcolm Mitchell's ReadBowl**.

Founded by former NFL star Malcolm Mitchell, ReadBowl is a global competition that tracks reading minutes to see which classes can out-read the rest. It uses a sports-style format to build momentum, making the goal of "more minutes" feel like a team effort. It's been a great way to get the kids picking up books without being forced to. They're genuinely locked into the competition.

Our 10,000-Page Goal

As we kick off the 3rd quarter, the students collectively set a massive goal: **to read 10,000 pages as a class.**

I am thrilled to report that we are already off to a strong start. To ensure we are truly mastering the material, every book is verified by a reading comprehension test before the pages are added to our total. Here is where we stand as of January 20th:

- **Chapter Books Completed:** 13
- **Total Page Count:** 2,269 / 10,000

Nebraska History: Heading West

In Social Studies, we are diving into our Nebraska History books. Our next chapter is **The Oregon Trail**, where we'll study the grit and struggles pioneers faced while traveling West through our state. To wrap up the unit, we'll be getting hands-on by **designing and building our own covered wagons.**

Math Update: Mastering Variables

In Math, we are moving into the foundations of Algebra. The students are beginning to master **variables and variable expressions**. It's a big shift in how they think about numbers, and I'm impressed with how quickly they are learning to translate words into mathematical expressions.

A Note from Mr.M:

I am incredibly proud of the hard work these 20 students are putting in. Whether it's tackling a difficult math expression or pushing through a long chapter for ReadBowl, their dedication this quarter has been awesome to watch. It is a joy to be their teacher!

A Fun Valentine's Fact: > Did you know over **35 million** heart-shaped boxes of chocolate are sold each year!

Close Up – Update

Close Up – Update

Our fundraisers for the month of February include:

- Puffins will be delivered – February 18
- Cookie sales will start February 12 – February 25

Thank you for supporting us in our fundraisers. We appreciate your support. As always, we will keep you updated on our future fundraisers.

HNS Close Up Students and Mrs. Spahr

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PRESCHOOL AT HARTINGTON-NEWCASTLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Please register your child by calling the office at Hartington-Newcastle Public School (402-254-3947). We will have a morning and an afternoon preschool session running Monday – Friday. The district is accepting applications for children that will be 4 by July 31, 2026.

Please feel free to call and place your child on the list. The current cost is $6.00 a day (150 days) unless you qualify for reduced - $3.00 or free - $0.00. If you have questions or wish to register, please contact the school as soon as possible at 402-254-3947.

JUST A REMINDER – TEACHER INSERVICE

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 – Teacher In-service - Noon dismissal – Lunch will be served. There will be no preschool.

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JUST A RE MINDER TO PARENTS:

Monday, February 16 – No School.

MRS. KNUDSEN'S THIRD GRADE NEWS

It is hard to believe we are already in the month of January. We have been very busy so far this year! Mrs. Knudsen's class has learned many new things! So far this year in math we have learned about multiplication, division, rounding, story problems, and are currently learning fractions! Every day we practice our math facts! In reading, we have worked hard on the main idea and text evidence and details to support the main idea. In science, we are currently learning about fossils, habitats, and environments over time. My students love to participate in hands-on experiments and activities in science. In social studies they have learned about citizens and government, Pilgrims, and how our communities have changed through time. In third grade, we are also learning how to write in cursive! We have also been working on many art projects for the Cedar County Fair! They are so creative and talented!

As third graders, we also are participating in a program called Big Cat/Little Cat. This is where Juniors and Seniors meet with my students monthly to discuss different topics and do activities with them. They love getting to meet and hear stories from the high school students! Additionally, every other Friday, we have first grade reading buddies. During that time my students get the opportunity to read to Mrs. Heckenlaible's first grade class!

Outside of our regular curriculum, every morning we have a "morning meeting" to meet as a class to discuss different social emotional topics. It also includes a fun fact and a joke or puzzle to start their day. It helps the students come together as a community and build on their skills such as teamwork, kindness, and other character traits. I am so proud of each and every one of my students!

Mrs. Knudsen
Third Grade













FEBRUARY, 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01 	02 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Popcorn Chicken Mac and Cheese Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	03 Chocolate Bread/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Hamburger/Bun French Fries Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	04 Mini Cake Donuts/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Stuffed Crust Pepperoni Pizza Croutons Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk **TEACHERS INSERVICE** **NOON DISMISSAL** **NO PRESCHOOL**	05 Cheese Omelet/ Toast/Fruit/Juice/Milk Chicken Legs Mashed Potatoes/Gravy Green Beans Fruit Milk	06 Assorted Cereal Bars/Fruit/Juice/Milk Super Nachos Lettuce Tomatoes Red Pepper Strips Fruit Milk	07 
08 	09 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Breakfast Sandwich Hashbrowns Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	10 Breakfast Pizza/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Turkey and Gravy Mashed Potatoes Corn Rolls Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	11 Pancake on a Stick/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Hotdog/Bun Baked Beans Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	12 Chocolate Muffins/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Soft Shell Taco Lettuce Tomatoes Red Peppers Fruit Milk	13 Yogurt Parfait/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Turkey and Cheese Sandwich Chips Veggies Fruit Milk	14 
15 	16 **NO SCHOOL** **PRESIDENT'S DAY**	17 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Sweet & Sour Chicken Rice Bread Veggies Fruit Milk	18 Sausage Biscuits/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Cheese Quesadilla Lettuce Tomatoes Red Peppers Fruit Milk	19 French Toast Sticks/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Mini Corn Dogs Mac and Cheese Veggies Fruit Milk	20 Banana Bread/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Grilled Cheese Sandwich Tater Tots Veggies Fruit Milk	21 
22 	23 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Goulash Bread Sticks Veggies Fruit Milk	24 Donuts/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Chicken Nuggets Cheesy Green Beans Veggies Fruit Milk	25 Tornados/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Salisbury Steak Mashed Potatoes/Gravy Corn Veggies Fruit Milk	26 Blueberry Muffins/ Fruit/Juice/Milk Philly Steak and Cheese Sandwich Hashbrowns Veggies Fruit Milk	27 Assorted Cereal Bars/Fruit/Juice/Milk Cheese Pizza Croutons Veggies Fruit Milk	28 
	**ALL MENUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**		**SALAD BAR OFFERED DAILY**		**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**	

HARTINGTON-NEWCASTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER
HARTINGTON-NEWCASTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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HARTINGTON-NEWCASTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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