Hartington-Newcastle

Public Schools

October, 2026

Newsletter

NEWS FROM SUPERINTENDENT JOHNSON

It seems inconceivable, but when this article will be published, we will be in the SEVENTH week of the 2026-2027 school year and it has gotten off to a great start! I know I do this every year, but I'd like to thank the teachers, staff, and students for everything they have done to make this a successful beginning and everything they will do to continue our great journey through the school year.

The school year definitely got off to an interesting start the first full week of school when the water line broke. I'd like to thank everyone who came to help that night and the next day to get things cleaned up and moved out of the basement. We had an impressive showing of people that night who were just immediately willing to help. It speaks to the great people we have, from staff to kids to parents who support our school. I can't thank the custodians enough. The custodians have been rock stars with the work they have done to not only clean up and move things, but to coordinate with the different companies who came in to get things fixed and complete the water removal and deep cleaning. I'd also like to commend the local folks who were immediately responsive when this happened. The city of Hartington and Feilmeier Electric were both here right away that night, and the Plumbing and Electric crew was at school bright and early Friday and worked over the weekend to get the water running so we could have school that following Monday. I'm sure a few kids were hoping it would take a few more days, but we are fortunate to have all of these people right here in the community who helped us get back to school in such a quick manner.

I'd also like to thank the booster club for all of the work they will do for our kids throughout the 2026-2027 school year. We are so fortunate to have such a great group of people who care so much about our school and our kids and show that all year by all of the work they do. Thank you, parents and booster club members, for being the Wildcats' number one fans!

As is customary in the first newsletter article, I'd like to talk about winter weather. We had very little winter weather last year (only one snow day), but with the way this fall has gone, I think we need to be ready for a busier winter. School weather announcements will be made on the school's calling/texting system, put on the website and social media outlets, and are placed on KTIV. The numbers we use for the calling/texting system come directly from the information we get from the forms you turn in at the beginning of the year and are what we put in Power School. If you notice an error or are not getting messages, please contact the school.

As we move towards fall, I'd like to remind you all to use caution while driving. This is a heavy traffic season for both farm equipment and deer. Please take time to talk to your children who may be driving on the highways for the first time to use extra caution and to always wear their seat belts.

This is a great year to be a Wildcat! Have a great 2026-2027 school year!

A. J. Johnson
Superintendent

Dear Parents,

I can not believe it is going to be October. School is in full swing and we are very thankful to be Wildcats!

Please take time to check-in with your child's teachers as we are mid-way through the first quarter. We want to provide your child a safe and successful year. You may contact teachers through email, Seesaw or simply call the school.

We look forward to Parent Teacher Conferences on October 21. Teachers will reach out to you to set up conference times.
The last day for shorts will be Oct. 16.

Thank you for your participation in the elementary fundraiser with Schoolmall. If you would like to still participate, please reach out to your child's teacher and we will get you the information you need. Proceeds will be used to help fund our field trips and activities.

Box Tops - We are still collecting Box Tops. The program has had an update. Instead of cutting labels, now you will need to download the Box Top App on your mobile device, choose Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools and you are ready to scan your receipts. There are still a few products that may have labels to cut. Please continue to send those to school. All proceeds from Box Tops are monetary. The elementary uses this money to fund field trips, after school projects, and STEAM activities. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's education, please contact me at school 402-254-3947 or via email: sedwards@hnscats.org.

Sarah Edwards
HNS Elementary Principal

TEACHER INSERVICE

Wednesday, October 7, 2026 – Teacher In-service – Noon dismissal. Lunch will be served. There will be no preschool.

JUST A REMINDER:

Friday, October 16, 2026 – Parent's Night for High School Football, Spirit Squad, and Girls Golf

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 – 1:00 p.m. dismissal. Lunch will be served. Parent Teacher Conferences will be from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

ATTENTION PARENTS:

Thursday, October 22, 2026 – Noon Dismissal

Lunch will be served. No Preschool.

Friday, October 23, 2026 – NO SCHOOL.

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NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION

On Wednesday September 9, the Hartington-Newcastle Chapter of the National Honor Society held its induction ceremony of their new members. The ceremony was led by NHS chapter President Jason Heimes. Officers each talked about the pillars of the National Honor Society. Vice President Kaylee Kloster spoke about Scholarship, Secretary Colton Cavanaugh talked about Service, Treasurer Lincoln Grutsch talked about Leadership, and Historian Emily Climer spoke about the importance of Character. Other previous members are Gabe Reyes, Aidan Anderson, and Austin Sudbeck. The new members that were inducted are Maximus McCray, Kloe Fischer, Natalee Hart, Allison Huesers, Vayda Lippert, Jaden Opfer, Ziva Stratman, Katelynn Uldrich, and Alyk Zach. Sponsor of National Honor Society is Mrs. LuAnn Spahr and the induction ceremony was conducted by Mr. Corey Uldrich.

NEWS FROM KEN KNEIFL

Remaining ACT Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Deadline
October 17, 2026		
December 12, 2026	November 6, 2026	November 29, 2026
February 27, 2027	January 22, 2027	February 7, 2027
April 10, 2027	March 5, 2027	March 23, 2027
June 12, 2027	May 7, 2027	May 25, 2027
July 10, 2027	June 4, 2027	June 22, 2027

***Note: There will be an ACT test given at Hartington-Newcastle Public School Wednesday, October 7, 2026. This test will be taken by all of the members of the Junior class and will be optional for any Hartington-Newcastle Seniors who wish to take it. This test will be of no cost to the students but will carry all of the benefits of recognition by colleges for college admittance and scholarship purposes. The Juniors will also take the ACT at school on Tuesday, April 13, 2027. This is the state mandated ACT.**

****Note: The John Baylor Onto College ACT Test Prep Program may be obtained before each testing session. Each Junior and Senior student has a John Baylor "Onto College" account which they may access at any time. In this account Seniors may access the ACT Prep program, the ACT Refresher program, a College Counseling program and a Test Taking/Study Skills program. Juniors may access the ACT Prep program, the College Counseling program, as well as the Test Taking/Study Skills program. Should a student wish to utilize any program they are encouraged to contact Mr. Kneifl and he can provide materials. It is strongly encouraged that students and parents view the College Counseling section as it provides college application and selection information, cost of college information, as well as scholarship information for colleges and universities throughout the United States.**

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
October 22, 2026		
November 7, 2026	October 23, 2026	October 27, 2026
December 5, 2026	November 20, 2026	November 24, 2026
March 6, 2027	February 19, 2027	February 23, 2027
May 1, 2027	April 16, 2027	April 20, 2027
June 5, 2027	May 21, 2027	May 25, 2027

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 Onto College SAT Test Prep Course. See Mr. Kneifl for further information.

College Rep Visitation Schedule

Please check the tab on Mr. Kneifl's webpage within the school website for information regarding the visit schedule of various college reps. At this time the following college reps are scheduled:

Wayne State College, Thursday, October 8th @ 1:00

Senior/Senior Parent Notes

The FAFSA form needed to obtain federal financial aid for college. At this time the FAFSA is scheduled to open for application October 1, 2026. 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 as you set up your account. You may set up your account at StudentAid.gov. The FAFSA form itself can be found at the same site. 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, you are at the wrong site. Again, applying for the FAFSA is free of charge.

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.

This is the time of year that seniors should be applying to colleges. It is encouraged to apply to several or more. Application does not commit the student to the college but it does provide the student with choice options.

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.

Seniors

Again this year we are planning for our college bound seniors an "Apply to College" Day. The tentative date for this to take place is October 20th. This will be a day which will give seniors an opportunity to apply to any and all colleges they wish to. The seniors will be given information which they may need to have in hand to complete various applications. This is an opportunity to complete applications with assistance available should they need it. If students have already completed any and all of the college applications they intend to, there will be scholarship application information and assistance information available. If a student does not intend to go to college they will still be invited to attend with information presented on constructing employment resumes and applications.

The plan is for this to begin at 2:00 and run through the end of the school day. We hope to make it a fun time while at the same time completing applications for college admittance and some scholarships. We have done this for the past 3 years and have come away very encouraged with what was accomplished. We are very excited to do this again.

Sophomores

The Northeast Nebraska Career Day for Sophomores is Tuesday, October 20th. This program will run from 9:00-2:00. The bus will leave HNPS at 8:00. The students will return in time for sports practice and to catch the bus home after school. This day is of no cost to the students.

Best Wishes

Mr. Kneifl

NEW TEACHER INTRODUCTIONS

Hello! My name is Ainsley Nelson and I am the new band teacher at Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools. I was raised in Wausa and graduated from high school in 2020. After getting my high school diploma, I studied music education at the beautiful Black Hills State University. There, I studied instruments, voice, music history and learned so much! Last year, I spent the year being a long-term substitute for the K-12 general music and choir in Hill City. Although I miss the kids, I am excited to be closer to home, and in a smaller, tight-knit community.

If you happen to catch me outside of school, I will be with my friends, family, or fiancé. At the beginning of the school year, I got engaged to my boyfriend of 4 years! I love spending time with loved ones, reading, painting, and baking. I am so privileged to begin my journey as the band teacher here as a wildcat!

Hi! I am Kati Hahne, I am so excited to be joining Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools as the Elementary Guidance Counselor! I am looking forward to getting to know the students, families, and staff and becoming part of the HNS school community.

Before becoming an elementary guidance counselor, I spent 13 years teaching Special Education at the 9–12 level. My years in the classroom gave me the opportunity to work with many different students and helped develop my passion for supporting students both academically and personally.

I grew up in Coleridge, Nebraska, where I graduated in 2007, and I still call Coleridge home today with my husband Todd and our three kids Aubri, Beckett, and Colston.

When I'm not at school, I'm usually on the go! You can often find me cheering on one of my kids at a sporting event or helping my husband. When I have some downtime, I enjoy reading, being active, and spending time with my family.

I am excited to build relationships with our elementary students and help them develop skills that will support them throughout school and beyond. I am also looking forward to working alongside teachers and families to help make HNS a positive place where students feel supported and successful.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools and am looking forward to a great year!

Hi everyone! My name is Miss (Meghan) Kratzer and I am excited to have the opportunity to teach at Hartington-Newcastle. I will be teaching 5th grade, along with 5th and 6th math. I am currently living outside of Bloomfield. This is my 5th year teaching. I previously taught at Ansley Public Schools, where I was a 3rd grade teacher.

I am originally from Litchfield, Nebraska, about 3 hours east of here! I was fortunate enough to go to Litchfield Public School from kindergarten to senior year! From there I went on to attend the University of Nebraska Kearney to get my bachelors degree in Elementary Education K-6.

Outside of school you can find me spending time with my family and friends. Wherever I am you can typically find my nephew following right along with me! During the summer my time is spent camping and fishing, while in the winter my family and I enjoy hunting. I also enjoy watching sports all year long.

I am excited to be a part of the Hartington-Newcastle community and look forward to a fun and successful school year!

Hello! My name is Joseph Mazour, and I am excited to join Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools as the new 7–12 Physical Education teacher. In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I will also serve as the Head Boys Cross Country Coach, Junior High Football Coach, and Assistant Track & Field Coach. This is my sixth year in education, and I am looking forward to becoming a part of the Hartington-Newcastle community!

I grew up in Vermillion, South Dakota, and graduated from Vermillion High School in 2013. I attended the University of South Dakota, where I earned my degree in Physical Education in 2018. I then continued my education at Mount Marty University, where I had the opportunity to serve as a graduate assistant coach for the baseball program and the Strength & Conditioning Department. I graduated with my Master of Education degree in 2021.

Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and being outdoors whenever I can. Some of my favorite activities include hunting, hiking, camping, reading, exercising, and cooking.

I am excited to be joining such a positive and thriving school district and community. I look forward to building relationships with students, families, staff, and community members and am excited for the school year ahead!

Hello! My name is Charlie Schroeder and I am excited to be the new elementary STEAM teacher here at Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools. This is my first year teaching and I recently just graduated from the University of South Dakota. Last year, I was student teaching 2nd grade in Jackson, Nebraska.

I grew up here in Hartington and went to several area schools, including Hartington-Newcastle, before graduating from Wynot in 2022. I started undergrad at the University of Nebraska-Wesleyan where I pursued an Elementary Education degree. I was also recruited to play football and run track there. Due to injury, I was no longer able to play collegiate sports and transferred to the University of South Dakota. I graduated last May with a Bachelors degree in Elementary Education.

Outside of school, you can find me helping my family with their many projects, playing basketball, or working different jobs around the area. I am coaching Junior High and High School basketball in the winter, and track in the spring. I am so excited to continue on with my first year and create wonderful memories with everyone here at Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools!

Hi! My name is Sydney Jelinek. I am the new 6th grade teacher and volleyball coach at HNPS! I teach 6th grade literacy and 6th/5th grade science. I am an assistant for the high school volleyball team and head coach for the junior high volleyball team!

I grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska where I attended Norris High School where I graduated in 2022. I then went on to play college volleyball at Concordia University Nebraska. There I majored in Elementary Education and minored in Psychology.

My parents are Scott Jelinek and Jean Jelinek-Frager. I have one sister, two step brothers, and one step sister. My sister is a college volleyball player in California, one step brother is playing basketball at the University of Nebraska, another step brother just started high school, and my step sister is working full time!

In my free time I love to hang out with my friends and family back home! I love watching, playing, and coaching any kind of sport! I also love to travel, cook, and watch movies!

I am so excited to have joined such an amazing school and community! I am looking forward to building connections with all the students and staff here in school! Go Wildcats!

PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

MRS. KRUSE

Mrs. Kruse and her students have been busy in the preschool classroom. We have many students who are experiencing school for the first time, and we are honored to be able to ignite their passion for learning. Many of the skills we learn in preschool are through play, hands-on activities, stories, and conversations. We are only a few months in and have already seen big steps in social skills and academics in the classroom!

Social Skills

Social skills are a huge part of our preschool curriculum! Our preschoolers are learning what it means to be a good friend, how to be kind and respectful to our classmates, and how to work together. We've also been learning to identify our emotions and practicing healthy ways to manage those big feelings!

Literacy

Our Fairy Tale theme was a huge hit in preschool! We had so much fun reenacting classic stories like The Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and The Three Billy Goats Gruff. We're also building important early literacy skills! Students are beginning to master recognizing their names, learning about an author's job, and identifying letters.

Science

We're not only learning to recognize colors, but also discovering how new colors are created. After learning about primary colors, we've been getting hands-on and experimenting with mixing colors to create secondary colors! Through these fun experiments, we're also learning to be curious like scientists by asking questions, making predictions, and discovering new things!

Classroom Moments

Class Officers 2026-2027

Seniors:
President: Karissa Bruning
Vice President: Colton Cavanaugh
Secretary: Ashlynn Pinkelman
Treasurer: Ashlynn Pinkelman
Sponsors: Cody Stappert and Lisa Rolfes

Juniors:
President: Vayda Lippert
Vice President: Kyptin Collier
Secretary: Cody Cavanaugh
Treasurer: Cody Cavanaugh
Sponsors: Lori Peitz, LuAnn Spahr and Grant Rolfes

Sophomores:
President: Dylan Heikes
Vice President: Henry Folkers
Secretary: Kayden Gustman
Treasurer: Kayden Gustman
Sponsors: Tylor Fincher and Kyle Stevens

Freshmen:
President: Logan Thoene
Vice President: James Uhing
Secretary: Harrison Winkelbauer
Treasurer: Waylan Grutsch
Sponsors: Dylan Dendinger and Anne Stratman

Eighth Grade:
President: Sonny Gotch
Vice President: Max Climer
Secretary: Carter Reyes
Treasurer: Max Wiedenfeld
Sponsors: Joseph Mazour and Pam Anderson

Seventh Grade:
President: Jason Gaynor
Vice President: Maddie Fuller
Secretary: Emmy Kelly
Treasurer: Emmy Kelly
Sponsors: Mandy Hochstein and Mike Johnson

Student Council:
President: Jason Heimes
Vice President: Austin Sudbeck
Secretary: Karissa Bruning
Sponsor: Kari Ekberg

Student Council Class Representatives:

Senior Representatives:	Karissa Bruning
	Jason Heimes
	Kaylee Kloster
	Austin Sudbeck
Junior Representatives:	Ella Eickhoff
	Kloe Fischer
	Ziva Stratman
Sophomore Representatives:	Dylan Heikes
	Nathan Heimes
	Nora Lange
Freshmen Representatives:	Caleb Heimes
	Rex Lippert
	Lauren Uldrich
8th Grade Representatives:	Max Climer
	Max Wiedenfeld
7th Grade Representatives:	Maddie Fuller
	Emmy Kelly
	Brylee Poston

FCCLA OFFICERS:
President: Allison Huesers
Vice President: Vayda Lippert
Secretary: Katelyn Uldrich
VP of Public Relations: Ziva Stratman and Ella Kelly
VP of Membership: Hadley Grutsch
Sponsor: Kelsey Schumacher

National Honor Society:
President: Jason Heimes
Vice President: Kaylee Kloster
Secretary: Colton Cavanaugh
Treasurer: Lincoln Grutsch
Historian: Emily Climer
Sponsor: LuAnn Spahr

FFA OFFICERS:
President: Jason Heimes
Vice President: Karissa Bruning
Secretary: Kyson Lammers
Treasurer: Gus Lammers
Reporter: Gabe Reyes
Sentinel: Cris Kneifl
Parliamentarian: Colton Cavanaugh
Historian: Scout Heimes
Chaplin: Jayden Lordemann
Sponsor: Emma Lammers

HARTINGTON-NEWCASTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICIAL NOTICE REQUIRED ANNUALLY BY THE ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT OF 1986.

Date of Notification: August 10, 2026

To: All building occupants (teachers, custodians, students, parents, alumni, etc.)

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (referred to as AHERA) was enacted by Congress to identify and develop solutions for any problems that schools may have with asbestos.

We recently had our facilities inspected by a certified asbestos inspector, as required by AHERA. The inspector located, sampled, and rated the condition and hazard potential of all material suspected of containing asbestos. We are pleased to report that no suspect asbestos containing materials were found in our school. (ALL ASBESTOS REMOVED MAY/JUNE of 1989).

Under the law, we still must maintain an asbestos management plan for the school and assign a designated asbestos coordinator to ensure no asbestos is introduced into the school. This plan is available for inspection in the school during regular school hours.

We will continue to ensure that a healthy, safe school environment is maintained. Any inquiries may be directed to Supt. A.J. Johnson, the designated asbestos coordinator, telephone 402-254-3947.

October, 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	ALL MENUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE	**THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER**		01 Chocolate Muffins/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Chili Soup Cinnamon Rolls Crackers Veggies Fruit Milk	02 **NO SCHOOL** **Teacher Workday**	03
04	05 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Walking Tacos Lettuce Tomatoes Red Peppers Fruit Milk	06 Cheese Omelet/Toast/Fruit/ Juice/ Milk Salisbury Steak Mashed Potatoes Gravy Corn Fruit Milk	07 Sausage Biscuits/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Hot Dogs/Bun Baked Beans Veggies Fruit Milk **Noon Dismissal** **Teacher Inservice**	08 Chocolate Bread/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Turkey & Cheese Sub Chips Veggies Fruit Milk	09 Cereal Bars/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Homemade Alfredo Pizza Croutons Veggies Fruit Milk	10
11	12 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Mexi Tots Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk	13 Banana Bread/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Chicken Legs Mashed Potatoes Gravy Peas Fruit Milk	14 Frudels/Fruit/Juice/Milk Pulled Pork Sandwich Baked Beans Veggies Fruit Milk	15 Pancake Wraps/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Tater Tot Casserole Bread Veggies Fruit Milk	16 Yogurt Parfait/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Mandarin Orange Chicken Rice Bread Veggies Fruit Milk	17
18	19 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Chicken Noodle Soup Grilled Cheese Sandwich Veggies Fruit Milk	20 Donuts/Fruit/Juice/Milk Chicken Strips Cheesy Green Beans Veggies Fruit Milk	21 Pumpkin Bread/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Hamburger/Bun Chips FreshVeggies Fruit Milk **1:00 P.M. Dismissal** **Parent/Teacher Conferences**	22 Waffle Sticks/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Stuffed Crust Pepperoni Pizza Croutons Fresh Veggies Fruit Milk **Noon Dismissal**	23 **NO SCHOOL**	24
25	26 Assorted Cereal/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Fiestada Lettuce Tomatoes Red Peppers Fruit Milk	27 Breakfast Pizza/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Breaded Chicken Patty Sandwich Chips Veggies Fruit Milk	28 Blueberry Muffin/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Breakfast Sandwich Potato Wedges Veggies Fruit Milk	29 Cereal Bars/Fruit/Juice/ Milk Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes Gravy Green Beans Fruit Milk	30 Chocolate Muffins/Fruit/ Juice/Milk Spaghetti/Meat Sauce Garlic Bread Veggies Fruit Milk	31 **HALLOWEEN**