



May  
2026  
Vol. 28  
No. 10

# Dakota Prairie Knight Reader

<http://www.dakota-prairie.k12.nd.us>

## A Few Things by Jay Slade, Superintendent



Hello and welcome to May;

The month of everything turning green, planting crops, and putting the finishing touches on a great school year. To our DP student drivers, please be cautious out there and pay attention to farm machinery on the roads.

For my first topic, I'd like to talk about activities. By now all of our Spring sports are in full swing. Baseball, Track, and Softball are all in midseason and what a start it has been! The softball team is state contenders, we have track kids who are working towards who keep pushing for personal bests and beyond, and our baseball team is looking to make strong post-season push. For music and speech, their championship seasons are coming up. **Congrats** to all the competitors who made it to state speech and state music. That is quite an accomplishment, and I have no doubts you will make us all very proud. **Congrats** to our elementary volleyball team. You can see the growth from game to game, and the future is bright for NC Volleyball. Also, **congrats** to our coaches. You put hours and hours into helping our kids, and it shows. Finally, a huge thank you to our bus drivers/shuttle drivers. Because of the weather, everyone knows winter is the most stressful season, but spring wins the prize for the most chaotic. Your willingness to pivot day to day is appreciated. Which leads me to my second point – bus drivers.

As I have mentioned throughout this entire school year, we need drivers. Whether those drivers drive routes, act as sub drivers, or act as activity drivers, we need help with it all. If you have the time and are willing to help out, please let us know. We are still working on logistics for next year, but there is a very good possibility we will not be able to offer school shuttles after practice. If you have the inclination to drive, please contact me at either campus and we will get you set up with the correct requirements to drive.

My next topic is retirees at Dakota Prairie. It is with profound gratitude and with some reservation that we say good luck on your next adventures to Sharon Gunderson, Mona Marquardt, and Glenn Phillips. You will be missed, and we thank you for your years of service at Dakota Prairie. You all have left a positive impact on our kids and our community.

As we get close to the end of the school year, my final topic is grades.

*Continued on page 2*

**AVAILABLE  
ONLINE**

**PRINT COPY  
AVAILABLE  
BY SPECIAL  
REQUEST**

### Inside this issue:

Library News	2
Community News	3-4
School Board Minutes	5-6
High School News	7-11
Prom Photos	12-13
Elementary News	14-15

*A Few Things continued*

Students and Guardians, please make sure you are caught up on assignments. There is nothing more devastating than working so hard for 8 months, only to let it slip at the last moment. Even though the weather is turning nice (finally) and other priorities are starting to begin, remember – students, your first job is to graduate and make a positive impact on our community. So stay vigilant with your work and end the year strong.

As always Go Chargers! Go Knights!!

## LIBRARY NEWS

The BOGO Book Fair is always a smashing success. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported the love of reading. It's so much fun to see students get excited about books. Thank you also goes out to the 21st Century Program and Ms. Klefstad for partnering up for Family Night.

At the elementary school, the 3rd graders are almost done going through the Dewey Decimal System. In May, we will cover the 900s—History and Geography. We're going to learn a little more about maps and (if we have time) create our own flag.

The 4th graders just finished up their animal research projects. They did a fact sharing session, where each student said which animal they researched and gave 2 cool facts about them. The animals researched this year included anaconda, axolotl, arctic fox, Baiji (an extinct species) dolphin, bobcat, lion, wolf, gorilla, camel, koala, giant panda, scorpion, snowy owl, Tasmanian devil, bison, river otter, and giraffe. Next for them is learning about flags and creating their own.

Fifth grade was alphabetizing authors and worked together to put recently returned books in order on the cart. Then we moved to shelf reading, which was a tall order task. We pivoted to previewing boxes from publishers and next they are going to learn about weeding in the library collection. I'm going to have them pull some flimsy/tiny books from the shelves and help decided whether to remove them from our collection or give them a magazine box.

The sixth graders have been researching biomes and are collaborating to present information on their space starting next week. Personally, I've always been intrigued by desert animals and how they adapt to the temperatures and lack of water. Fennec foxes and kangaroo rats just kind of look cool too. Look for their posters in the hallway when you come to the 6th grade graduation.

I will be going through the chapter books in our last month here. We need to make space for new titles and refresh the shelves a bit. Hopefully I can get some older books ready for new homes before school lets out. If you see a book cart in the hallway, game on.

## NC CHARGER BAND AND CHOIR

May 2<sup>nd</sup> State Music

May 5<sup>th</sup> Spring Concert Tuesday @ 6pm at Dakota Prairie High School



**The last day of school is Thursday, May 21st**

### GRADUATIONS

K 5/19 10 AM

6TH 5/19 2 PM

12TH 5/24 1 PM

**Friday, May 22nd is a Teacher Work Day to allow teachers to wrap up in their classrooms.**

## BLANKETS FOR SALE

### FCCLA FUNDRAISER



contact [renae.schanilec@k12.nd.us](mailto:renae.schanilec@k12.nd.us)

The NHS held the spring blood drive in Petersburg last week. We missed our goal but did get 13 donors and 1 new donor. Any student who attempts 4 times will receive a certificate and cord for graduation.



**Join Us May 6th for the 2026 Senior Salute-to celebrate all graduating seniors.**

**Families are invited to the Petersburg gym from 9-10 am.**

**Scholarships and graduation honors will also be announced.**



Here is the finished product of Johnson/Molstad 7 Mindsets project than we started in March.

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

## ~ UNOFFICIAL MINUTES~

DAKOTA PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

## REGULAR MEETING

- ◆ Mr. David Blasey—President
- ◆ Mr. Charlie Stein
- ◆ Mrs. Jennifer Rusten
- ◆ Mrs. Nikki Ohnstad
- ◆ Mrs. Anna Halvorson

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Blasey, also present were Charlie Stein, Nikki Ohnstad, Jennifer Rusten via Zoom and Anna Halvorson was absent. Also present were Superintendent Jay Slade, Principals Jackie Bye and Clay Johnson, Hunter Sand Athletic Director and Lori Dahl, Business Manager.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Charlie Stein Second by Nikki Ohnstad to approve the agenda as printed.

Nelson Griggs District Health (Cassandra Schock and Cassie Anderson) was present via Zoom to discuss a Positive Action Curriculum. They want to pilot a program that includes the Positive Action Curriculum. There is opioid money from the County that will pay for the program. The proposal is for next year and to begin with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. At this time, it is projected that the funds will be available between 5 and 10 years.

The public comment was opened. There were no requests or visitors

The minutes and bills were presented for consideration. Motion by Charlie Stein Second Nikki Ohnstad to approve the minutes as printed and the bills for payment. All in favor, motion carried.

Activity Director Report: Boys' basketball ended with [a 6th](#) place at State Tournament. There was an awesome fan following at the tournament. Thanks to all for helping make everything work. R. Schmidt was named to the all-tournament team. The winter coop meeting was held on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Discussions included: Jersey rotations and timelines for ordering; Hudl advertising thumbnails for the year, should be easy and seamless. Nelson County will host the Volleyball districts in Lakota next season; the music program will be added to the coop agreement. The Spring Banquet June 7th at Duffers 10a.m. Winter banquet in Lakota was a success; the RSVP system worked well. Spring: all sports all in progress, Jason Beglau has been hired as junior high softball coach, will be able to stream softball on hudl they are working on getting Tolna set up for baseball

Elementary Principal Report: Elementary events and activities upcoming and completed. 6<sup>th</sup> grade visit to the high school, NDA+ Summative assessment next week. Staff appreciation supper will be on April 29<sup>th</sup> and will do recognition awards, retirements and hall of fame. Dr. Bye reported on student achievements, early entrance preschool policy, Dr. Bye does not recommend the early entrance for pre-school for multiple reasons, wants the board to think on this. She also [reported on](#) attendance, building and grounds updates, staff and current enrollment as well as projected 26-27 enrollment. She also reported on the Amira reading program, a student issue which was resolved and a non-certified personnel termination,

High School Principal Report: Student attendance, Prom went well, the kids were well behaved, there have been some questions brought to Mr. Johnson if the prom can be [cooped](#) with Lakota. It would take lots of planning, but no decisions have been made. PT conferences last month, the attendance was not great, and he is pleased we are trying something different next year. Over the last few years, all conference attendance numbers have decreased. The 6th trade transition meeting is tomorrow. He

[Continued on page 6](#)

School Board Minutes continued.

reported on the student success this past month, math counts, spelling bee, Science Olympiad qualifiers for state speech and we have the Region 5 speech coach of the year. We have hired a business teacher, are still looking for a math teacher. State testing started today and 2 scheduled for next week,

Superintendent Items for discussion: Open enrollment received for a student [to attend](#) Larimore, and discussion of advertising for a new 57 passenger bus. The board directed the administration to [advertise for](#) a 57-62 passenger new bus.

Items for Decision:

The board needs to designate by position and name a Homeless Liaison and Foster Care Liaison. Motion by Nikki Ohnstad second by Charlie Stein to appoint Clay Johnson, High School Principal as the Homeless Liaison and Jackie Bye, Elementary Principal as the Foster Care Liaison. All in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on Employee Classifications and upcoming changes; board approved the suggested changes.

1<sup>st</sup> reading of the following policies: FC, FG, FGDC, GBBA, GCB, GCE, HBCC, HCBB, HDD, HEAC, HEBA, IAAA, IAB, IDB, IEAC, JBA, KAAD, KAAD-BR.

Motion by Charlie Stein Second by Nikki Ohnstad to approve the first reading of policies: a. FC, FG, FGDC, GBBA, GCB, GCE, HBCC, HCBB, HDD, HEAC, HEBA, IAAA, IAB, IDB, IEAC, JBA, KAAD, KAAD-BR. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Jennifer Rusten, [second](#) by Charlie Stein, to reaffirm policy GABDB. All in favor, motion carried.

The financial reports were presented for review and approval. Motion by Nikki Ohnstad, second by Charlie Stein to approve the financial reports as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

The next meeting will be May 14, 2026, at 7:00 a.m. via ZOOM.

Motion by Nikki Ohnstad second by Charlie Stein to adjourn, all in favor, motion carried.

---

Business Manager

---

Chairperson

## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

As we close out another school year at Dakota Prairie High School, it's hard not to feel a strong sense of pride in what our students and staff have accomplished. This year has been filled with success across a wide range of activities, showcasing just how talented and well-rounded our school truly is.

We've had students and teams reach the state level in numerous areas, including Science Olympiad, speech, spelling bee, MathCounts, Esports, and basketball, along with national participation in 4-H. These accomplishments speak volumes about the dedication of our students and the support they receive from coaches, advisors, teachers, and families. It's a reminder that success at DPHS doesn't come in just one form; our students continue to excel in many different arenas.



Another important highlight this year has been our continued focus on maintaining a safe and supportive school environment. Through ongoing meetings and committee work, we have remained committed to ensuring that our practices are grounded in both data and common sense. Our goal is always to create a space where students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. As the principal, I will always have everyone's safety at the forefront of my vision.

One area we will be examining more closely moving forward is the use of our one-to-one devices. While we are fortunate to provide each student with access to technology, we also recognize the importance of balance. As a result, we will be looking at ways to restructure how and when devices are used, including the possibility of limiting take-home access. We appreciate your understanding as we work to make decisions that best support student learning and well-being.

Beyond the accolades and testing data, what stands out most to me is the character of our students. They are, as a whole, a respectful and helpful group. Time and again, when asked to lend a hand, whether it's helping me or the lunch ladies, they step up without hesitation or complaint. That willingness to help others is something I value just as much, if not more than academic or athletic success.

As we head into the final stretch of this school year and begin preparing for the next, I am excited for what lies ahead. I have great confidence in our graduating seniors as they take their next steps, and I look forward to welcoming our incoming 7th graders as they begin their journey at DPHS. Along with new journeys, I'd be remised not to mention good luck to Mrs. Kelly Johnson in her new journey of taking care of her family. Kelly has been an integral part of DPHS since we both started in 2021 and is behind many of the committees that help this school run. We will miss her and are also happy for her. I hope to see her back in our building one day.

Finally, I would like to say what an honor it has been to serve as principal at Dakota Prairie High School over the past six years. I am grateful for this community and look forward to continuing our work together in the 2026–2027 school year.

Cheers,  
Mr. Johnson

## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

### CHARGERS GIRLS GOLF STARTS MONDAY AUGUST 3rd

The Nelson County Chargers Girls Golf will start their 2026 golf season August 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Rock Creek Golf Course in Lakota, ND. Practice will start at 9am. Girls need to find transportation for themselves until school starts up. Students must attend 4 practices with Mr. Martin to be eligible for their first golf meet.



Girls and parents should pay attention to their Remind app and Chargers Nation Facebook page for more information on the upcoming season as we get closer to August 3rd. The Remind app code is @4gk8bf. Remember to try to get your physicals done by the middle of July and give them to the office of the school your student athlete attends. I hope everyone has a great summer and gets a chance to play some golf!

Esther Donohue visited the Senior English class to teach the students about blog writing and how it can be used to generate a side income. She currently manages several blogs covering a wide range of topics such as homesteading, candy making, and her Sweet Prairie food truck. Her work has been featured in *Real. Good. North Dakota*, *North Dakota Nice*, and *Edible North Dakota Magazine*. Esther is active across multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Links to her blogs can be found below.

<https://sweetprairie.net/>

<https://thephaten.com/>



## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

There is a joke in our modern world about those who “peaked” in high school. You can visualize the graying 42 year old quarterback still talking about the regional semi-finals as if it were just last year. Some people stay “stuck” in their high school years because they feel it was truly the best years of their life. They feel that way because high school often rewards those with athletic abilities and social aptitudes. It’s one the few times in life we get publicly recognized for our smarts, talents, and for having good attendance. After high school, life becomes less structured and those things we used to be “rewarded” for are now just expected. After high school, the world becomes bigger and your success is totally dependent on your ability to adapt, set long range goals, and be utterly self-driven. If one isn’t so talented at those things, it can feel like one’s “best years” were in high school.

Everyone’s timelines are different. My hope for this graduating class is that you can look back at high school as a good chapter; not the whole story. You should feel proud of what you accomplished, no matter how big or small it was. I want them to know that all stories can be re-written, so if there is something they wished they’d done differently, they have countless chapters ahead in life to grow, change, and learn.

### Welcome to New Hire: Darcy McGee

Darcy McGee earned a Bachelor of Science from Northern State University with Basic Business and Computer Options. She has been teaching business, computer, and CTE classes in South Dakota and Minnesota schools for 27 years. She continues to adapt her teaching to our changing world and student needs. Her fantastic students and supportive coworkers inspire her to do her best every day.



Her husband, John, works as a commercial and agricultural loan officer. They have three adult children. Gunner is the oldest and is a South Dakota farmer. He is married to Sami, who is an agricultural loan assistant. Gunner and Sami have a daughter, Lainey, who is five months old and our entire family's pride and joy. Jaidyn is a bank human resources generalist and will be marrying Grant in August. Grant is also a South Dakota farmer. Jack is the youngest in the family and serves as a Ranger Qualified sergeant in the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division.

In her free time, Darcy enjoys camping, kayaking, playing cards, and cooking. One of her greatest joys is when former students send her requests for copies of their resume or other materials they created in class.

## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

### REGION 5 SPEECH COMPETITION

**Fiona Klein Dagan Slade Amanda Vance**

3<sup>rd</sup> in Humorous

1<sup>st</sup> in Impromptu

3<sup>rd</sup> in EPR

3<sup>rd</sup> in Radio

State Qualifiers  
Fiona, Dagan, & Hayley

**Royce Dalzell**

**Hayley**

4<sup>th</sup> in Humorous

**Rosewaren**

8<sup>th</sup> in Inform

2<sup>nd</sup> in Poetry

**Hayley Rosewaren & Amanda Vance**

5<sup>th</sup> in Humorous Duo

Graduation will be Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm. It is held at the McVille Elementary Gym.



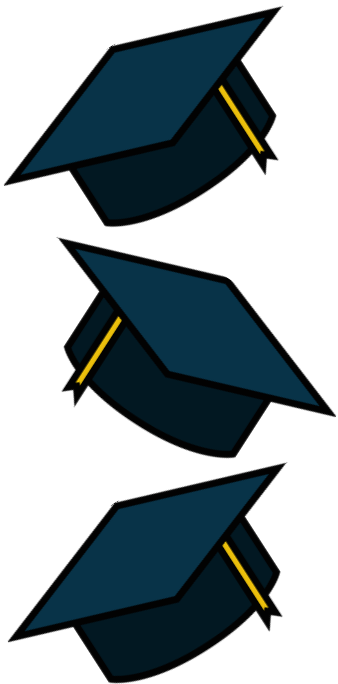
Parents/guardians of the seniors will get information sent to their email. Contact Kelsey, Clay or Lori T at the high school if you have questions.



Ms. Sarah Johnson was named Region 5 Speech Coach of the Year at the Regional Speech competition held at Dakota Prairie Elementary in McVille on Saturday, April 11.



Ms. Hurst's Knight Time with their celebratory donuts for their winning March Madness bracket.



## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS



The seventh graders moved on to the frog dissection!



**Congratulations,  
Rain!**



Junior, Rain Nahinurk is the winner of the Nelson-Griggs County Health design contest for the new logo for the Nelson-Griggs Suicide Prevention Coalition. Rain received her a prize of \$100! (Her first art commission.) The design is set to be featured on a t-shirt as well.

### Semester Tests Schedule

#### **Wednesday, May 20th**

- Period 1**
- Period 3**
- Period 5**
- Period 7**

#### **Thursday, May 21st**

- Period 2**
- Period 4**
- Period 6**

# Prom 2026





### ~ Elementary News ~

What an awesome fun day learning about Native Americans from Jennifer Rusten. We are so lucky and blessed to have wonderful people willing to come and share their knowledge and she even brought us fry bread and wojapi.



## UPCOMING ELEMENTARY EVENTS

**BOGO BOOK FAIR**

**APRIL 27-MAY 1**

**SPRING CONCERT**

**TUESDAY, MAY 12**

**7:00**

**KINDERGARTEN GRADUATION**

**TUESDAY, MAY 19**

**10:00**

**6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE GRADUATION**

**TUESDAY, MAY 19**

**2:00**

~ Elementary News ~



Student Council Fundraiser for Pre-schooler Mack Gardner Family. \$280

**Save the Date**  
STEAM Camp - McVilIe  
May 26-29  
STEAM Camp - Petersburg  
June 2-5  
  
**Registration forms available soon.**

# COLOR RUN 2026

**AR Awards—March '26**

<u>25 Points</u> Owen Hamre Jenna Mercer	<u>200 Points</u> Lily Walter
<u>100 Points</u> Karsen Harding Micha Madche	<u>400 Points</u> Crosby Hendrickson
	<u>900 Points</u> Calla Naas



# May 2026

- May 5 High School Concert @ 6 PM
- May 12 Elementary Spring Concert @ 7 PM
- May 14 School Board Meeting @ 7 AM
- May 19 Elementary Graduations (page 14)
- May 21 Last Day of School
- May 24 Graduation @ 1 pm in McVile

**PLEASE CHECK THE DAKOTA PRAIRIE HOME PAGE FOR THE MOST CURRENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULES**

<https://www.dakota-prairie.k12.nd.us>

# Future Dates of Interest

**May 21—Last Day of School**

May 22—Teacher Work Day

May 24—Graduation @ 1pm



**Dakota Prairie School District  
Box 37  
Petersburg, ND 58272**

*Frequency of Publication  
Information:*

Dakota Prairie Knight Reader is published monthly during the school year by Dakota Prairie School District, except for the summer months when a June/July and August issue appear. The main office for the district is located at 518 4th Ave. Petersburg, ND 58272.

Comments may be made in writing or by calling 701-345-8233 during school hours.

Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure	Nondiscrimina- tion and Anti- Harassment Policy	Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure
--	--	---



Dakota Prairie  
Course Descriptions



Dakota Prairie does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age, in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Dakota Prairie Superintendent has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies. (Supt. Jay B. Slade, P.O. Box 37, Petersburg, ND, 58272, 701-345-8233, [jay.slade@k12.nd.us](mailto:jay.slade@k12.nd.us)).

Title IX Coordinator: Dakota Prairie Superintendent – District Office Phone Number 701-345-8233 (Supt. Jay B. Slade, P.O. Box 37, Petersburg, ND, 58272, 701-345-8233, [jay.slade@k12.nd.us](mailto:jay.slade@k12.nd.us)).