The Central Valley Chronicle

October 2026

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

INSTILLING PRIDE, INSPIRING OTHERS

MS. VLACH'S

COUGAR CONNECTION

2026-2027

As we move through the fall, our students have been busy both inside and outside of the classroom. One of the things I appreciate most about Central Valley is the variety of opportunities our students have to experience, explore, and expand, whether in the classroom, through an activity, or beyond our school walls.

Students recently completed their fall NWEA MAP testing in reading, math, science, and language. We were excited to see strong growth from many of our students. While growth is always worth celebrating, the real value of MAP testing is what we do with the information afterward. Our teachers are analyzing the results to identify strengths, areas for growth, and ways to adjust instruction to better meet the needs of students in each classroom.

That work continued during our first full professional development day of the year. Teachers spent time digging into current MAP data and working in small groups to develop Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) based on the needs they identified. They also had time to collaborate across grade levels and content areas, creating important conversations about how we can work together to support student learning throughout our building. This is another important part of our mission, using what we know about our students to help them continue to grow and expand as learners.

Our students have also had plenty of opportunities to explore beyond the classroom. This fall, students have participated in experiences such as Husker Harvest Days, UNL College Access activities, FCCLA events, and many others. Approximately 80% of our students are involved in at least one extracurricular activity, including athletics, FCCLA, FFA, One Act, and other school activities.

These experiences matter. They give students opportunities to discover interests, build relationships, develop leadership skills, and represent Central Valley beyond our school walls. Whether through academics, activities, or new experiences, our goal remains the same: to provide opportunities for all our students to experience, explore, and grow as they work toward becoming successful citizens.

October Central Valley Elementary NEWSLETTER

Instilling Pride, Inspiring Others.

WE ARE THE COUGARS

From the Principal

At Central Valley Elementary, we know it takes every piece of the puzzle to make our school complete. **Every Cougar is an important piece of CVE,** and our school and communities become stronger when we take time to reflect, recognize, and include each piece.

We're already seeing some great teamwork this year! In **first grade, Mrs. Ryan** is modeling how to share, collaborate, and help others—and her students are putting those skills into action every day. **Way to go, first grade!**

Thank you, families, for being an important piece of our CVE puzzle. Together, we're *Instilling Pride, Inspiring Others!*



Upcoming Events

- **9/30** — **Parent-Teacher Conferences** — All teachers at the Scotia Site
- **10/15** — **End of Quarter 1**
- **10/16** — **No Student Day** — Staff Professional Development
- **10/23** — **No School** — Fall Break
- **10/30** — **CVE Halloween Celebrations**

Attendance

At CVE we STRIVE FOR 95!

What is Strive for 95?

Strive for 95 is an attendance initiative. Students are expected to achieve a **95% or higher** average daily attendance rate throughout the academic year.

What does 95% mean?

In practical terms, this means a student should miss **no more than 9 days** of school across the entire standard 180-day school year.

Did You Know?

50% more likely to be proficient in **Language Arts**

80% more likely to be proficient in **Math**

Students who hit the 95% attendance mark are **50% more likely** to be proficient in Language Arts and **80%** more likely to be proficient in Math compared to chronically absent peers.

Attendance Matters!

Reminder:

School Mall Fundraiser IS STILL IN SESSION!

Thank you for supporting Central Valley Elementary!

Central Valley Enrollment Summary as of 9/28/2026

Grade Level	Total in Grade	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific: Islander	Black (Not Hispanic:)	Hispanic:	White (Not Hispanic:)	Unclassified
PK3	11	0	0	0	0	11	0
PK4	18	0	0	0	0	18	0
K	16	0	0	0	0	16	0
1	19	0	0	1	0	18	0
2	29	0	0	0	1	28	0
3	23	0	0	1	0	22	0
4	21	0	0	1	1	19	0
5	26	0	0	0	1	25	0
6	17	0	0	0	0	17	0
7	33	0	0	0	1	32	0
8	21	0	0	0	0	21	0
9	23	0	0	1	1	21	0
10	21	0	0	0	0	21	0
11	30	1	0	0	0	29	0
12	24	0	1	0	0	23	0
Total	**332**	**1**	1	4	5	**321**	0

*Preschool is half-day. 3-year olds attend in the morning and 4-year olds attend in the afternoon.

**Kindergarten is all day every day



Addy Ryan, Taylor Rosander, Landen Poss

Spanish Instructor Mrs. Laurie Alexander

Yo soy means **I am**.

Spanish I students created a poster with positive adjectives to describe themselves in Spanish and hang in their lockers to remind themselves how " **brilliante**" they really are!!

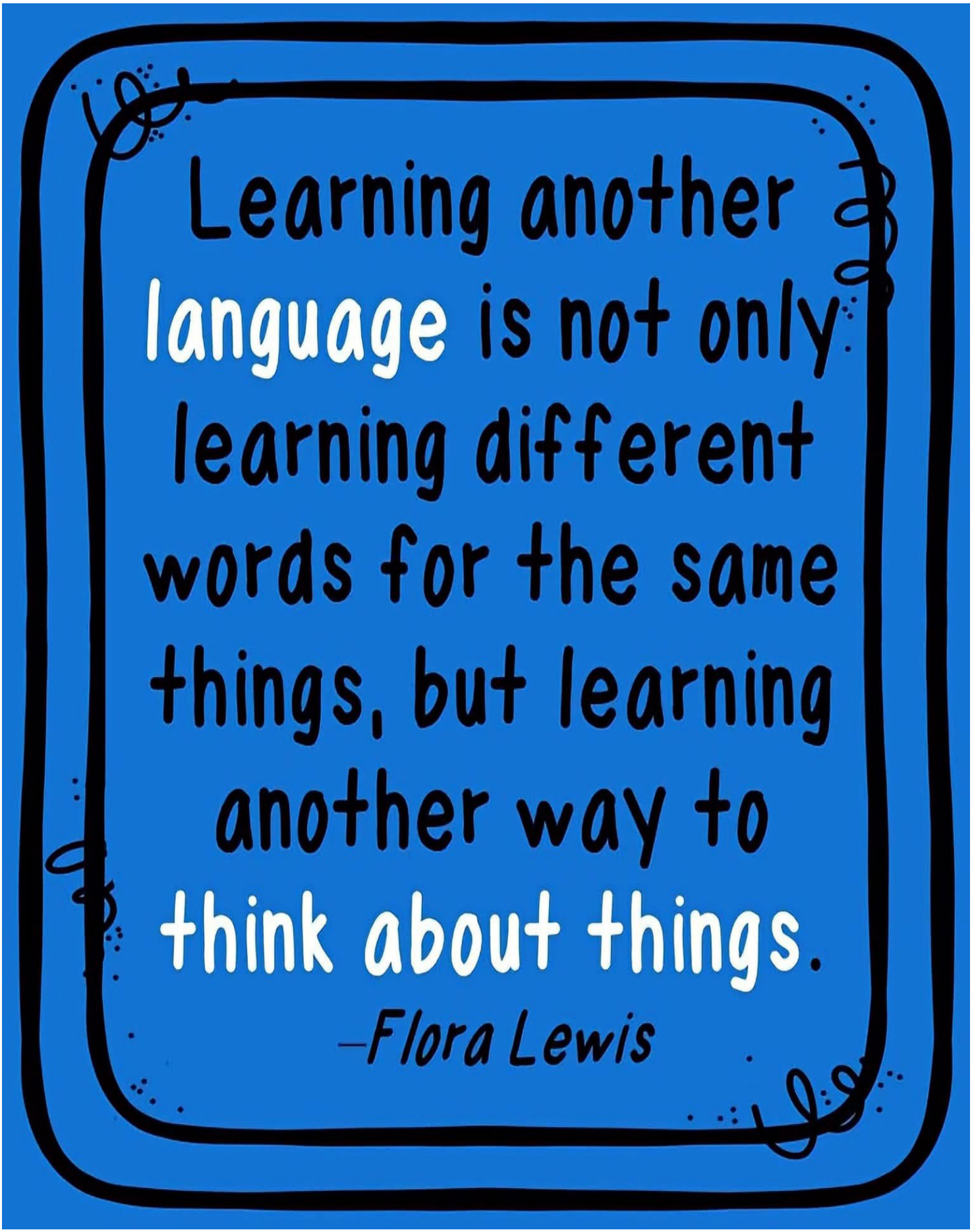
ESPAÑOL



Tenley Perrott, Haylee Allen



Drexon Dugan, Maci Ford, Cash Hammerstrom


Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things.
—Flora Lewis

Spanish I, II, and III students from Central Valley attended World Language Day at the University of Nebraska at Kearney on Wednesday, September 23.

Throughout the day, students participated in mini-language sessions featuring French, Italian, Japanese and German. They also had the opportunity to meet and talk with UNK language professors, explore the campus, and learn more about studying world languages at the college level.

Students enjoyed lunch at the UNK Student Union and received a World Language Day T-shirt. The event also included poster contests and awards recognizing students who demonstrated excellence and enthusiasm in world language learning. Brooklyn Perrott and Annaka Wood were both recipients of this award.

World Language Day gave Central Valley students an exciting opportunity to experience new languages, explore the UNK campus, and see how their language skills could connect them to future educational and career opportunities.









Art Instructor ~ Mr. Scott Wood

The Art 3D class begins each school year by studying techniques in 3-dimensional art. A few projects we use to explore these techniques include recreating famous art pieces while studying the effects of layering and ways to add texture to cardboard. Another project we use to study 3D form using cardboard is to recreate cardboard shoes to scale and attempt to make them appear as realistic as possible. Eventually, the students in this class will progress to other materials and building techniques that include laser-cut designs made using balsa wood, hand-building techniques with clay and pottery, as well as recycling materials like soda cans and wire to create sculptures

These students have their art creation on the Art 3D poster:

Lane Foltz (has 2 items on there)

Luke Shoemaker

Leah Welch

Dale Barr

NEWS FROM THE CV FCS ROOM

MRS KENNEDY AND MRS. DAVIS

Student Teacher

Mrs Katie Davis has joined the CV FCS classroom this Semester. Katie is in her last semester of college at Chadron State and Student Teaching in a classroom is the last step for her before graduating in December with a Secondary Education Degree in Family and Consumer Science.



Mrs. Davis is teaching 7 classes in the FCS classroom. She is enjoying getting to know all the students and especially is excited to be trying out some new curriculum and her favorite class to teach is Culinary 2/3

FCCLA Red Cross Blood Drive a great success

The 2nd Scholarship blood drive was held Wednesday September 23rd. 54 Units were collected and we are currently in the $1000 Scholarship tier.
First Time Blood donors were Taten Sherman, Dale Barr, Jalen Eckton, Misty Parsons and Paige Berst.
Milestone gallons were
1 Gallon: George Jensen and Kevin Hughes
2 Gallon: Nicole Wood
10 Gallon: Bob Thompson

Thank you to CV FCCLA members Alandra Luby, Laretta Davis and Paige Berst for assisting with the day.

FCCLA starts new year with expanded chapter members!





LIBRARY NEWS

Mrs. Angela Boyce
CV Media Specialist

Students at the elementary school have been reading to work toward their Accelerated Reading goal. Students in preschool through sixth grade visit the library every week. These students have practiced good book care, listened to stories, and checked out several books.

The Book Fair will be September 28 through October 1. The Book Fair has been a successful event for our school for many years. It is wonderful to get books in the hands of our students. Thank you to all who supported the Book Fair!

Please help your child keep track of their library books. It is best to return your library book before checking out another one.





Give your teen's brain a workout

Thinking is essential for learning, and the more students do it, the better. In school, your teen is expected to analyze and evaluate material, make connections and support conclusions. At home, ask your teen to:

- **Examine all sides** of an issue. Encourage your teen to develop arguments defending opposing viewpoints with equal dedication.
- **Double-check information.** Instead of assuming something online is true, have your teen verify the facts with credible sources.
- **Explain situations**, examples and problems in detail. To do this well, your teen will need to develop a strong vocabulary and an ability to express ideas clearly.
- **Identify bias** and assumptions. Is that website or social media post promoting an agenda? Does it present complete information, or cherry-pick facts to make a point? Is a "fact" really an idea based on an assumption. Stereotypes, for example, are usually unfair and misleading.

Stay positive when talking to your child about grades

If your child's grades need improvement, a supportive-rather than upset-response from you can make a difference. To encourage your elementary schooler's best effort:

1. **Talk to your child.** Ask questions like: What do you think is going on? Do you understand the lessons? Do you complete your work in class? What could you do differently?
2. **Talk to the teacher.** Is your child having any issues at school? What resources are available to help?
3. **Show your child** how to find or figure out answers instead of just giving up.

Early Development Network

Babies Can't Wait

The Early Development Network provides early intervention services for families with children birth to age three with developmental delays and/or health care needs. Our program connects families with needed services and provides ongoing support. EDN has caring and professional Services Coordinators to serve families with an individualized and strengths based focus. These services are free to families and we welcome anyone who may have questions or concerns.

If you are concerned about a child's development or know someone who is please call EDN (308)237-2280 at ESU 10 for services in Region 10 or 1(888)806-6287 for referrals throughout Nebraska. If you are unsure which EDN office serves your area please call (308)237-2280 and we are happy to assist you in finding your best contact person.

To learn more about our program please visit esu10.org and choose the EDN tab in English or Spanish or visit edn.ne.gov.

MUM SALE!

The FFA Mum Sale was a great success. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support!





17th Annual Girls' Night Out

Girls' Night Out 2026 will be held in the CV Elementary Gym in Scotia from 6:00 - 8:30 pm on Saturday, November 14.

Tickets may be purchased from a CV 10th grader. Please contact Mrs. Alexander at the high school with questions.

It's a great way to get a head start on your Christmas shopping, buy locally, and support the Central Valley 10th grade class as they fundraise for their trip to Washington D.C.

Tickets includes one drink, dessert buffet, appetizers, your chance to win and have a fun evening with friends!!

See you there!



"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

~ Bryant H. McGill

Central Valley One-Act Team Prepares for Competition Season

Central Valley One-Act is looking forward to another exciting season! This year's production, WITNESS, tells the story of the final days of Jesus largely through the eyes of the women who followed Him, loved Him, and remained near during some of the most difficult moments. Their stories of faith, grief, courage, and hope come together as they witness His crucifixion, resurrection, and the beginning of something far greater than they ever imagined.

Our cast and crew have already been working hard to bring this powerful story to life, and we are excited to share it with our school and surrounding communities. We are also looking forward to a great competition season as we take WITNESS on the road and represent Central Valley.

We invite everyone to attend a performance, support our students, and experience this special story with us. Be watching soon for information about ordering this year's Central Valley One-Act T-shirts so you can show your Cougar pride and support the team!

2026 ONE-ACT PERFORMANCE DATES/TIMES

Monday, October 19th Elm Creek Festival @ 8:15am

Monday, November 2nd Ord One-Act Festival @12:45pm

Monday, November 9th CCCV One-Act Festival at Central City @1:00pm

Monday, November 16th Central Valley Festival at Central City @10:00am

Tuesday, November 17th Community Performance in Greeley @ 7:30pm

Wednesday, November 18th Cougar One-Act Workshop in Greeley @ 8:00am

Tuesday, November 25th Conference One-Act at Central City @ 3:30pm

Wednesday, November 25th High School Performance in Greeley @1:00pm

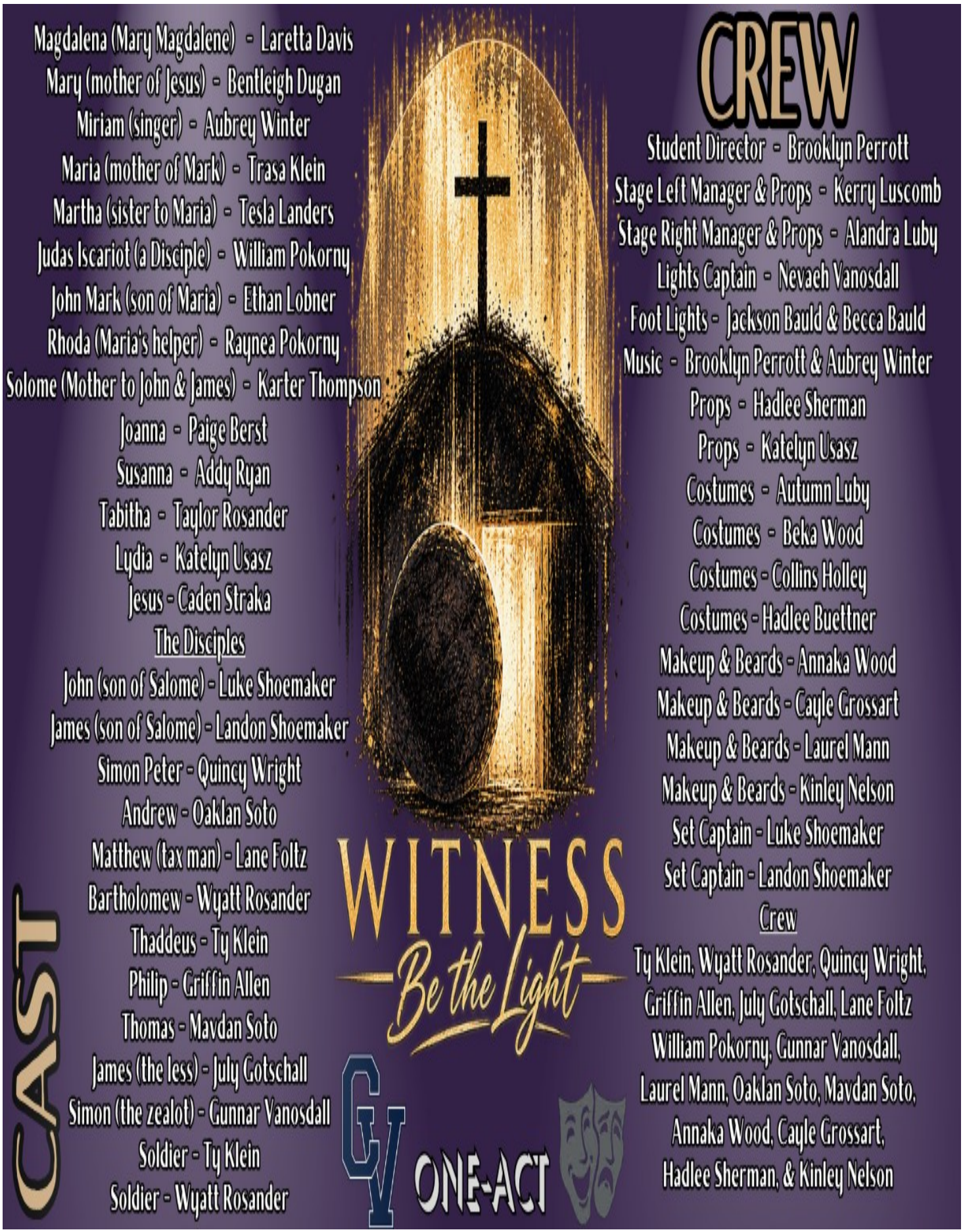
Monday, November 30th District One-Act in Southern Valley @11:00am

Thursday, December 10th State One-Act in Norfolk at 10:00am

(must qualify for State at Districts)






CAST
Magdalena (Mary Magdalene) - Laretta Davis
Mary (mother of Jesus) - Bentleigh Dugan
Miriam (singer) - Aubrey Winter
Maria (mother of Mark) - Trasa Klein
Martha (sister to Maria) - Tesla Landers
Judas Iscariot (a Disciple) - William Pokorny
John Mark (son of Maria) - Ethan Lobner
Rhoda (Maria's helper) - Raynea Pokorny
Solome (Mother to John & James) - Karter Thompson
Joanna - Paige Berst
Susanna - Addy Ryan
Tabitha - Taylor Rosander
Lydia - Katelyn Usasz
Jesus - Caden Straka
The Disciples
John (son of Salome) - Luke Shoemaker
James (son of Salome) - Landon Shoemaker
Simon Peter - Quincy Wright
Andrew - Oaklan Soto
Matthew (tax man) - Lane Foltz
Bartholomew - Wyatt Rosander
Thaddeus - Ty Klein
Philip - Griffin Allen
Thomas - Mavdan Soto
James (the less) - July Gotschall
Simon (the zealot) - Gunnar Vanosdall
Soldier - Ty Klein
Soldier - Wyatt Rosander
WITNESS
Be the Light
GV ONE-ACT
CREW
Student Director - Brooklyn Perrott
Stage Left Manager & Props - Kerry Luscomb
Stage Right Manager & Props - Alandra Luby
Lights Captain - Nevaeh Vanosdall
Foot Lights - Jackson Bauld & Becca Bauld
Music - Brooklyn Perrott & Aubrey Winter
Props - Hadlee Sherman
Props - Katelyn Usasz
Costumes - Autumn Luby
Costumes - Beka Wood
Costumes - Collins Holley
Costumes - Hadlee Buettner
Makeup & Beards - Annaka Wood
Makeup & Beards - Cayle Grossart
Makeup & Beards - Laurel Mann
Makeup & Beards - Kinley Nelson
Set Captain - Luke Shoemaker
Set Captain - Landon Shoemaker
Crew
Ty Klein, Wyatt Rosander, Quincy Wright,
Griffin Allen, July Gotschall, Lane Foltz
William Pokorny, Gunnar Vanosdall,
Laurel Mann, Oaklan Soto, Mavdan Soto,
Annaka Wood, Cayle Grossart,
Hadlee Sherman, & Kinley Nelson

MAKE THIS YEAR UNFORGETTABLE.

THE YEAR. THE MEMORIES. THE STORY.

2026–2027 YEARBOOK

Big moments. Everyday memories. All in one book.



ORDER YOUR YEARBOOK TODAY!

Scan the QR code to purchase.

yearbookforever.com

Questions? Contact Jodie Thies

308-428-3145

jodie.thies@centralvps.org

FLU SHOT CLINIC

CENTRAL VALLEY SCHOOLS

October 22nd

Wolbach: 8:30-9:00 AM

Scotia: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Greeley: 1:00-3:00 PM

Give Flu Season Your Best Shot!

Loup Basin PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

For more information, please contact us!

Call: 308-346-5795

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
October 2026
Helping Children Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Use frequent and fun activities to help your child master math



Math is a subject that builds on what students already know. To solve today's problems, your child must be able to remember and apply previously-learned concepts.

Research shows that one effective technique for long-term learning is *distributed practice*. This means that instead of practicing math for one hour once a week, your child should practice the same material in shorter chunks of time every day.

There are many fun ways to help your elementary schooler practice math. Here are three to try together:

1. **Pretend your calculator is broken.** Say, "Imagine our calculator has no number 8. What are some other ways to represent that number?" It could be 10-2 or 4+4 or 24/3.
2. **Play games with dice or cards.** Take turns rolling two dice or flipping over two cards and quickly adding up the sum of the two numbers. Later, include subtraction, multiplication and division in the challenge.
3. **Combine coins.** Put an array of coins on a table. Keep a few in your hand that your child can't see. Then, say something like, "I have three coins in my hand. Together, they are worth 60 cents. What are they?" Your child can use the table coins to solve the problem. Then, trade places.

Source: G.M. Donoghue and J. Hattie, "A Meta-Analysis of Ten Learning Techniques," *Frontiers in Education*.

Questions are welcome at conferences

A parent-teacher conference provides valuable one-on-one time with the teacher to learn about your child's academic progress, behavior and well-being. You can also find out more about what to expect in the year ahead.

Preparing specific questions in advance will help you make the most of your time with the teacher. Ask questions like:

- **Are my child's reading** and math skills at the level you would expect for this time in this grade?
- **Is my child in different** groups for different subjects?
- **What topics will you cover** in class this year?
- **What are your expectations** for work and reading at home?
- **What are my child's** strengths and areas for improvement?
- **How well does my child** get along with other students?
- **Does my child qualify** for any special programs?
- **How can I support** my child's learning at home?

Dive deeper into reading



Strong readers can understand the meaning, context and details in a text. To develop reading comprehension skills, encourage your child to:

- **Summarize the** chain of events in a story out loud. Why did things turn out that way?
- **Discuss ways** the text relates to things your child has learned or experienced.
- **Take a character's** place. Would your child make the same choices?
- **Consider what point** the author was trying to get across.

Source: "Reading Comprehension and Higher Order Thinking Skills," K-12 Reader.

Learning thrives on respect

Respectful behavior helps create the positive school environment students need to learn. To teach your child what it involves:

- **Discuss respect.** How does it feel to be treated with respect or disrespect?
- **Demonstrate.** Treat your child and others with respect.
- **Notice and praise** respectful behavior.

Reinforce responsibilities

Learning in school is your child's job, and it comes with responsibilities. Remind your child that fulfilling them means:



- **Being prepared** for class with pencils, paper and a positive attitude.
- **Participating** in class discussions.
- **Organizing,** so your child can find schoolwork and supplies when needed.
- **Persisting** when work is challenging.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Helping Children Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School
October 2026

Q&A Gaming is taking over my child's life. What can I do?

Q: My child loves to play games online, and often rushes through schoolwork in order to play them. I'm worried about the effects on my child's schoolwork and mental well-being. What should I do?



A: Some games—such as those on educational topics or that promote exercise—can be beneficial. However you are right that too much time on the wrong activities can negatively affect health and learning. Game designers know how to create games that keep players hooked. And some games include "gambling" and reward elements that increase the risk that players will become online gamblers.

To keep gaming from interfering with schoolwork, healthy activities and time with friends and family:

- **Set boundaries.** Review game content. Allow only educational games, and only in your presence. Then, establish screen-free times of day, such as schoolwork time, reading time, mealtime, family time and bedtime.
- **Emphasize** that learning matters more than leveling up in a game.
- **Offer enjoyable screen-free alternatives.** Plan fun activities such as reading aloud, playing outdoors and playing board games.

Parent Quiz Are you teaching problem-solving skills?

All children face obstacles. To overcome them, they must identify and act on solutions. Are you helping your child learn to think through problems and decide what to do? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you provide** your child with lots of opportunities to practice making decisions?
2. **Do you ask** your child to think through problems with you? Do you ask questions rather than jumping in with solutions?
3. **Do you talk** about your child's strengths and suggest applying them to challenges?
4. **Do you tell** your child about strategies you use to find solutions when you have problems?
5. **Do you remind** your child about times your child managed problems well in the past?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are helping your child tackle problems head-on. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best."
—Duke Ellington

Teach the value of honesty

Honesty is a fundamental value in school as well as life. However, around third grade, when grades and tests take on more importance, cheating sometimes follows. Stress the importance of honesty with your child. Make it clear that:

- **Working hard** at learning and being honest are more important than getting a high grade.
- **Cheating is never OK,** even to help a friend. Together, role-play ways to say *no.*
- **A grade or test score** will never change your love for your child.

Encourage recall practice



Research shows that recalling information is a learning activity that helps students retain material better. To help your child put this study strategy to use:

- **Suggest inviting** a friend over to study. The children can quiz one another. Or, you can call out questions.
- **Create practice tests.** Help your child look over notes, reading and handouts and create questions the teacher might ask. Then your child can answer them.

Source: P.K. Agarwal and others, "Retrieval Practice Consistently Benefits Student Learning," *Educational Psychology Review.*

Chores teach skills & more

Assigning chores may sound old-fashioned. But children who do a few age-appropriate chores at home learn lessons they can apply in school. Chores can help children:

- **Invest** in making their surroundings or family life better.
- **Learn** life skills.
- **Develop** self-discipline.
- **Learn** to take pride in their work.
- **Practice** working with others.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL October 2026

Helping Students Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Ask questions to help your child find solutions for math problems



Helping your middle schooler with math may seem difficult if the concepts are unfamiliar to you. Don't worry! You don't need to have the answers to demonstrate how to tackle math assignments. The key is to ask questions that will help your child figure things out.

When your child is stuck, ask:

- **Which problem** are you working on? Help your child focus on one thing at a time. This can ease any feelings of intimidation your student may be feeling when faced with a whole sheet of equations.
- **Can you read me the instructions?** Reading directions out loud can help your child pick up on key words that were overlooked the first time.
- **Is there any part of the problem you can do?** Once your child gets started, things may become clearer.
- **Are there things you have learned before** that might help you?
- **Where could you look for more explanation?** Suggest that your child check the textbook, the class website or search online for instructional math videos on the concept.

If your child is still confused after giving a real effort, ask, "How soon can you ask the teacher for help?" Suggest writing down specific questions to ask.

Make your home a place for learning

Building skills and increasing knowledge aren't just school activities. When you promote and reinforce learning at home, your child becomes a stronger student. Here are some simple ways to enrich your child's non-school hours:

- **Engage in conversations** about all kinds of subjects. Ask what your child thinks. Listen and ask follow-up questions.
- **Teach life skills.** Assign your child meaningful responsibilities. Demonstrate how to prepare simple meals and follow a budget.
- **Ask about newly-learned** topics and ideas. What does your child find most interesting? Have your child explain concepts to you. Retelling information reinforces it in students' minds.
- **Introduce your child** to new things and experiences. Ask, "Can you think of a way this relates to what you are learning in school?"
- **Ask for help.** Have your middle schooler apply knowledge and skills to answer questions or help you with projects.

Turn reading into learning



When your child needs to learn and recall academic material in a reading assignment, a four-step approach can help. Encourage your middle schooler to:

1. **Skim the text** and pay attention to graphics, headings and boldface text to get an idea of key points.
2. **Read the text slowly** and take notes.
3. **Write a summary** of the main themes and supporting facts.
4. **Answer questions** about the material. If there aren't any at the end of the text, you child can make some up and then answer them.

Demonstrate organization

To help your child manage multiple classes and activities effectively, show how to use:

- **A planner** to record and see assignments and schedules in one place.
- **To-do lists** to stay on top of daily, weekly or monthly tasks.
- **Sticky notes** to jot down reminders or thoughts to come back to later.

Provide thinking practice



Middle schoolers are expected to research topics, think deeply about information and back up ideas with solid evidence. To help your child rise to the challenge, ask questions that require higher order thinking, such as:

- **Why** is your favorite so good? What characteristics make it better than other things?
- **How** could we do this better (or save money on this)?
- **Which** should we get? Which product or service is the best choice and why?

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Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School
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Q&A My child won't say what's wrong. What should I do?

Q: My middle schooler is clearly upset about something, but doesn't want to talk about it. How can I get my child to open up without being too pushy?



A: It's common for adolescents to clam up when it comes to discussing problems with their families. But issues that drag on for days or weeks can affect health and schoolwork, so it is important to keep trying to find out what is bothering your child.

To open the door to two-way communication:

- **Express concern.** Say something like, "I can see there's something on weighing on your mind. I'm here for you no matter what. You can talk to me about anything. It's my job to help you figure things out."
- **Define expectations.** "I respect your privacy and your desire to handle this yourself. Take a little more time to think things over, but I do need to know what's happening. Let's talk after dinner and see if we can figure it out together."
- **Reach out for support, if necessary.** If your child still refuses to talk, contact a school counselor, doctor, coach or other trusted figure in your child's life. Work together to discover what's going on and help your middle schooler manage it.

Parent Quiz Are you helping your child stay focused?

It takes concentration to pay attention in busy classrooms, read complex material and solve multi-step problems. Are you helping your middle schooler strengthen focus? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you establish** screen-free times and zones and have your child turn off unneeded devices and apps when doing schoolwork?
2. **Do you suggest** that your child set goals for each study session?
3. **Do you minimize** distractions when your child is working?
4. **Do you encourage** your child to engage in screen-free focus-building activities, such as making models or playing sports?
5. **Do you notice** and offer praise when your child persists and sees tasks through?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are helping your child develop powers of concentration. For each* no *answer, try that idea.*

"People think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are."
—Steve Jobs

Supervise social media use

Research shows that the majority of 11 and 12-year olds use social media despite being underage. To learn to navigate this world safely, they need adult guidance. To help:

- **Set behavior standards.** No hurtful posts. No posting anything your child wouldn't want the whole world to see.
- **Protect privacy.** Review settings and limit who can see your child's posts.
- **Demonstrate balance.** Put phones away during time with your child.
- **Ask your child** to tell you about posts that are confusing or scary.

Source: J.M. Nagata and others, "Prevalence and Patterns of Social Media Use in Early Adolescents," *Academic Pediatrics.*

Help your middle schooler practice being responsible

Having some responsibilities at home helps your child learn to handle them at school. Avoid overload by assigning just a few new self-care responsibilities that fit age and maturity, like making school lunches or doing laundry. Then, allow your child to learn by experiencing consequences when responsibilities aren't met.



Foster traits for learning

Each student is an individual. But students who achieve in school share many qualities. To help your middle schooler develop:

- **Curiosity,** expose your child to new ideas and experiences.
- **Persistence,** help your child set goals and praise effort and progress.
- **Resilience,** encourage learning from mistakes and planning for improvement.
- **Confidence,** show your love and belief in your child's ability to learn.

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HIGH SCHOOL October 2026

Helping Students Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Teach your teen strategies for evaluating online information



The world of digital media is changing fast, and the vast amount of information available online is not regulated for quality or accuracy. Some of it is misleading or just plain wrong. As a result, the ability to assess the accuracy, reliability and bias of online sources is a vital skill for high school students.

Whether your teen is looking online for information for a school assignment or for personal interest, recommend using these strategies:

- **Choose among search results carefully.** That AI summary above the list of results may be drawing on unreliable sources. The sites at the top of the list aren't necessarily the best—they may have paid to be there.
- **Consider the source.** When reading anything online, your teen should ask: *Is the purpose of this site or channel to sell a product or agenda? Where do the facts come from?*
- **Compare sources.** Your teen should check out multiple sites on the same subject. Comparing two or three side by side can help your teen see the limits and merits of each.
- **Be skeptical of health information.** Many sources are in business to sell products. Your teen should discuss health information with a doctor before acting on it.

Source: J. Breakstone and others, *Students' Civic Online Reasoning: A National Portrait*, The Stanford History Education Group, Stanford University.

Apply new thinking skills to learning

Brain development in the high school years gives students' more ability to think analytically, plan ahead, solve problems and control impulses. But they need practice in applying these new skills to learning and schoolwork.

Encourage your teen to adopt study habits that help, such as:

- **Color-coding** different types of information and materials. Your teen's brain will categorize the information it sees in different colors as it processes what steps to take next.
- **Outlining steps** of long-term projects. Your teen will be able to see progress, what remains to be done and due dates in one place.
- **Following routines.** Consistent patterns help teens manage time and stay on track.
- **Creating diagrams** to visualize information. These make it easier to understand and recall material.

Source: P. Lorain, "Brain Development in Young Adolescents," National Education Association.

School counselors can help



You have an ally in supporting your teen in school. Your teen's counselor is trained to assist families with many issues. Reach out with questions or concerns about:

- **Classes** or scheduling.
- **Grades,** academic or learning issues and how to help your teen.
- **Social or emotional issues** affecting your teen.
- **Planning for life** after high school.
- **Finding resources** and support in a family crisis.

Improve learning behavior

In a recent survey of teachers, the majority said that disruptive student behavior in school has gotten worse. Teachers also say that effective help from families would have a positive impact. To provide it:

- **Discuss** appropriate school behavior with your teen. Make it clear you expect it.
- **Involve your teen** in setting rules and consequences. Enforce them consistently.
- **Keep an open mind** if the school contacts you with a concern about your teen's behavior. Listen to all sides before making decisions or taking action.

Source: H. Kurtz and M. Riser-Kositsky, "Teacher Morale in 2026, Five Takeaways," Education Week.

Foster more responsibility

Self-disciplined, responsible students do better in school—and adulthood. To foster these traits, ask your teen to:



- **Schedule** and track personal appointments.
- **Set** and stick to a budget.
- **Plan** a family activity.
- **Read** news articles. The responsibilities of world leaders offer teens perspective.

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HIGH SCHOOL
Helping Students Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School
October 2026

Q&A Math isn't my strength. How can I help my teen with it?

Q: My teen is having a tough time with math this year. I was never very good in math, and I don't know how to help. What can I do?



A: This is a common situation. But no matter what your own math skills are, there are several ways you can support your high school student:

- **Model the right attitude.** Research shows that families' attitudes toward math have a direct effect on their children's achievement in it. Instead of saying "I never liked math, either," make it clear to your teen that you think math is worth learning and your teen is capable of learning it.
- **Point out all the ways** you use math during the day—on the job, in the kitchen, while paying bills, etc. Help your teen see that math is something adults need to know.
- **Get your teen talking.** Ask your teen to explain a problem to you, step by step.
- **Suggest tackling any part of a problem** that your teen *can* do, and showing all work. Then your teen can ask the teacher for clarification, and the teacher will be able to see where things went off track.
- **Encourage persistence.** The feeling of finally "getting it" motivates students to take on new challenges.

Parent Quiz Are you helping your teen handle issues?

Few students sail through school without ever hitting a snag—a challenging class, a complex concept, a demanding teacher. Do you know how to help if your teen is facing an academic struggle? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Do you help** your teen get to the root of the issue? Ask, "Why do you think you are struggling?
2. **Do you recommend** that your teen spend time every day studying for the class?
3. **Do you encourage** your teen to ask the teacher for help making a plan for improvement?
4. **Do you explore** other resources for help with your teen, such as online videos or tutoring?
5. **Do you contact** the teacher or school counselor yourself if your teen continues to struggle?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are boosting your teen's ability to solve academic problems. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"Where there is a problem there is an opportunity to learn something new."
—Nitin Namdeo

Get specific about reading

Teens are more likely to do things when they are given specific instructions rather than general suggestions. So to encourage reading, try suggesting a specific book. To find titles to recommend:

1. **Ask what types of writing** your teen enjoys—fantasy, nonfiction, biography, etc.
2. **Find lists** and reviews of books for teens on sites like Goodreads.com and Commonsensemedia.org.
3. **Make a list** of a few titles your teen might like. Suggest one to check out on your teen's next trip to the library.

Source: T. Cremin and L. Scholes, "Reading for pleasure: scrutinising the evidence base" *Language and Education.*

Teach wise decision-making

Teens' decisions can affect their futures. Go through this process with your teen:

1. **Describe** the situation in detail.
2. **Brainstorm** as many options as you can. Discuss the pros and cons of each.



3. **Let** your teen decide.
4. **Evaluate.** Would your teen make the same choice again?

Establish social precautions

Social media can help teens feel connected, but it can also provoke feelings of anxiety and depression. To limit negative effects:

- **Charge phones away** from your teen's bedroom at night.
- **Encourage mood checks.** If social media is getting your teen down, it's time to turn to a friend or trusted adult.
- **Set a cooling-off period.** Say, "If a post makes you mad, wait 24 hours before responding."

Source: T. Masri-zada and others, "The Impact of Social Media & Technology on Child and Adolescent Mental Health," *Journal of Psychiatry and Psychiatric Disorders.*

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