*The Central Valley Chronicle*

May 2026

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

*INSTILLING PRIDE, INSPIRING OTHERS*

## MS. VLACH'S

# COUGAR CONNECTION

## MAY MOMENTS: REFLECTION, RECOGNITION, AND READINESS

As we move into the final stretch of the school year, we are looking ahead and preparing for a successful start to next year. Families are encouraged to review the attached school calendar, which outlines important dates, including early dismissal days, no school days for holidays, and scheduled Professional Development and required teacher training days for staff. Having these dates in advance helps ensure everyone can plan accordingly and stay informed throughout the year.

For the upcoming 2026-2027 school year, there will be a slight adjustment to dismissal times. Elementary students will be dismissed at 3:15 PM, and high school students at 3:30 PM. This change is designed to support student learning and also provide dedicated time for teacher planning, collaboration, and ongoing professional development. The change in dismissal times will also eliminate the Wednesday early dismissals.

As we celebrate this time of year, we look forward to honoring our graduating seniors. Graduation commencement ceremonies are a meaningful opportunity to recognize the hard work, perseverance, and accomplishments of our students. Throughout their high school careers, these individuals have met the graduation requirements while also earning various awards and honors. We are proud of their efforts and look forward to celebrating their achievements with families and the community.

This spring has given us a great opportunity to reflect on all of the positives from throughout the year. It's been exciting to see students involved in so many different activities, putting in the time and effort to grow, improve, and support one another. From the classroom to extracurriculars, there have been so many noteworthy moments. At honors night on May 2nd, we will formally recognize students for their hard work and accomplishments, both academically and beyond. These experiences really highlight the dedication of our students and the strong sense of community that makes our school such a great place.

And finally, while spring testing has officially wrapped up, learning certainly has not slowed down. Our students remain focused and engaged as they work through end-of-year content in their classrooms. It is exciting to see their growth and dedication as they finish the year strong.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, staff, and school community.

# Central Valley Elementary

## May Newsletter

*From the Principal's Desk: Mr. Nick Carlson*



### Cougar Community Recognition

### March Star Student Winners (HUMBLENESS)




### March Cougar Community Recognition







## Celebrating a Great Year & Looking Ahead to Summer

As we enter May, it's hard to believe another school year is coming to a close. This time of year is filled with celebration, reflection, and excitement as we look back on all that our students have accomplished.

We want to take a moment to thank our CVE families for a truly great year. Your encouragement and involvement have made a meaningful difference in the success of our students and our school. It has been a joy partnering with you and watching our students learn, grow, and achieve so much.

As we head into summer break, we encourage families to keep learning going in simple and fun ways. Reading together, practicing writing, and keeping math skills fresh can make a big difference in helping students feel confident when they return in the fall. At the same time, summer is meant to be enjoyed, so get outside, spend time with family, explore, and make great memories.

Thank you again for being such an important part of Central Valley Elementary. We are proud of our students and grateful for the strong community that surrounds them. Have a safe, fun, and relaxing summer!

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***Star Student Winners:*** Presley Nordhues, Ruby Wood, Hadlee Buettner, Austyn Allen, Wren Nekoliczak, Shelby Adams, Brinley Foster, Larkin Wood, Jaxon Olney, Kallum Holley, Krue Williams, Izzy Klemptner

**Cougar Community Recognition:** Mrs. Tier Kokes, Mr. Kevin Wood, Mrs. Sidney Ryan

# Central Valley Elementary

## May Newsletter

*CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working*



## Upcoming Events

**May 1st**
3rd Grade Field Trip
Ashfall Fossil Beds

**May 4th – 8th**
Teacher Appreciation Week

**May 5th**
6th Grade Transition. AM
Elementary Field Day 1:00pm (Greeley)

**May 6th**
Cougar Carnival (Testing Celebration)
2:15 Dismissal

**May 7th & 8th**
6th Grade Field Trip. Omaha Zoo

**May 7th**
2nd Grade Field Trip
Edgerton Explorit Center

**May 11th**
Muffins with Mom 2:30pm

**May 12th**
PreK Last Day

**May 13th**
AR Movie Day (Ord)

**May 14th**
1st Grade Field Trip. Hastings Museum

**May 15th**
Elementary Spring Concert 7:00pm

**May 18th**
Kindergarten Graduation 10:00am
6th Grade Graduation 2:30pm

**May 19th**
Cougar Community Recognition 9:00a
LAST DAY 1:30 Dismissal

## March Golden Spoon Winner: Mrs. Mary Wood's 3rd Grade Class






# Central Valley Elementary

## May Newsletter

*CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working*




## 2nd Semester Cougar Point Goal:

**100,000 Points**

## CVE Food Drive













# Central Valley Elementary

## May Newsletter

*CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working*



## WAY TO GO, STAR STUDENTS!







## March Pizza with the Principal



Sponsored by the Central Valley PTO!



# Central Valley Elementary

## May Newsletter

*CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working*







## A Final Message to Cougar Nation

Central Valley,

When I think about my time at Central Valley Elementary, I don't first think about schedules, meetings, or even events. I think about people. I think about the students who fill our hallways with energy, laughter, and growth each and every day. I think about the staff who show up for kids in ways that often go unseen, giving their time, their patience, and their hearts. And I think about the families and community members who have wrapped this school in constant support.

I've had a front-row seat to so many moments, big and small, that I will carry with me forever. Watching students grow in confidence, seeing classrooms come alive with learning, celebrating successes, and even working through challenges together, those are the moments that define a school, and Central Valley Elementary is full of them.

What makes this place special isn't just what happens during the school day, it's the way this community shows up for one another. It's the pride, the care, and the belief that what we do here matters. And it does. It truly does.

To our students - thank you for letting me be a small part of your journey. You are the reason this place is so special, and I am so proud of each and every one of you.

To our staff - thank you for the work you do every single day. You pour so much into our students, and I have the utmost respect for the way you lead, teach, and care.

To our families and community - thank you for trusting us, supporting us, and standing beside us. That partnership is what makes Central Valley strong.

As I step away as principal, please know that Central Valley Elementary will continue to do great things. The foundation here is strong, and the people here are even stronger.

This place has meant a great deal to me, and it always will. Thank you for everything!

— Mr. Carlson

MAY 2026 EDITION

# BOX TOPICS

Maximize your school's end-of-year earnings.

## MONTHLY BONUS OFFERS

Offers are valid on a single transaction from 5/1/26–5/31/26




**Buy 2, Earn 4**
on Pillsbury products*




**Buy 2, Earn 4**
on Annie's products*




**Buy 2, Earn 4**
on Old El Paso products*




**Buy 2, Earn 4**
on Nature Valley products*




**Buy 2, Earn 4**
on Cinnamon Toast Crunch products*

TEAM TEACHER!

**Buy 4, Earn 20**
on all products while supplies last

***Must submit your receipt within 14 days of purchase. Limit 5 claims per receipt.**

TEAM TEACHER!
Teacher Appreciation Week

### TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

From May 4-8, join us as we celebrate all the amazing educators out there. Keep an eye on the Box Tops Instagram to nominate your favorite teachers for exclusive giveaways all week long!

Follow us on Instagram **@btfe**




### CELEBRATE CINCO DE MAYO WITH OLD EL PASO™

Stock up on your family's favorites to get ready for the festivities — plus earn extra on all Old El Paso products with this month's bonus offer.

See all participating products at **BTFE.com/products**

**SEE PRODUCTS & LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BOX TOPS APP AT BTFE.COM**

**DON'T HAVE THE BOX TOPS APP YET? DOWNLOAD IT NOW:**

# All A Honor Roll - Quarter 3




**Bottom row l-r:** Kwyn Cargill, Maci Ford, Lydia Studley, Trasa Klein, Annaka Wood, Taylor McIntyre

**Second row l-r**: Payton Kniss, Dalton Dugan, Landen Poss, Maggie Kriewald, Brooklyn Perrott, Kinley Boydstun, Bentleigh Dugan

**Third row l-r:** Taylor Rosander, Breckyn Straka, Cayle Grossart, Laurel Mann, Ky Cargill, Ethan Lobner, Caleb Studley, Drexon Dugan

**Top row l-r**: Gunnar Vanosdall, Jonathan Bernt, Zevan Wolf, Oaklan Soto, Zavyer Wolf

**Not pictured:** Griffin Allen

# A/B Honor Roll - Quarter 3




**Bottom row l-r**: Nevaeh Vanosdall, Haylee Allen, Craytyn Wagner, Lauryn Rosander, Peyton O'Connor, Kashlyn Samway, Destiny Haynes, Jentry Dugan

**Second row l-r:** Alexa Gonzalez, Jaxon Stephens, Turner Freeman, Reed Gotschall, Tenley Perrott, Mason Shoemaker, Hadlee Sherman, Addison Ryan, Harper Jensen

**Third row l-r:** Mavdan Soto, Kinley Nelson, Owen Malmstrom, Landon Shoemaker, Zethan Wolf, Reed Gotschall, Lincoln Nekoliczak, William Pokorny

**Top row:** Quincy Wright, Cash Hammerstrom, Caden Straka, Taten Sherman, Stetson McManaman, Wyatt Rosander, Luke Shoemaker, Lauren Diessner

**Not Pictured**: Tyler Luscomb, Lane Foltz, Dallas Wadsworth, Laretta Davis, Kerry Luscomb, Cayda Landers, Gracen Owens, Graysen Wuertz

# FFA News

The Central Valley FFA traveled to Lincoln on March 25th, 2026, to attend the 98th annual Nebraska State FFA Convention. The chapter took 20 students, who competed for the chapter in various events, attended leadership conferences, and other networking events.



Lauren Diessner received her State Degree, which is the highest honor that the State Association can bestow upon a member. Lauren completed years of record keeping on her SAE project and completed a district interview process.



Aubrey Winter qualified for both the Nebraska State FFA Honor Choir and the Nebraska State FFA Talent portion. During the choir portion, Aubrey sang with other members throughout the state. She sang at almost every session! Aubrey was also selected to be in the talent portion, where she sang a song by herself in front of over 7,000 people in PBA. The State Association also reached out to Aubrey and asked her to sing the National Anthem at the Friday morning session.



The Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences team qualified at the district level. The team was made up of Wyatt Rosander, William Pokorny, Caden Straka, and Katelyn Usasz. Wyatt Rosander received first place at the district contest and 23rd at state. William Pokorny received third at the district contest and 97th at state.

The Farm Business Management team also qualified at the district level. The team was made up of July Gotschall, Zevan Wolf, Taylor Rosander, and Dalton Dugan. At districts, July Gotschall received eighth, Dalton Dugan received twelfth, Taylor Rosander received eighteenth, and Zevan Wolf received nineteenth.

The chapter also entered an Agriscience team, which is a freshman only competition. Members included Raynea Pokorny, Addison Ryan, Craytyn Wagner, and MaKenzie Borwege. The team took a fifty-question test and dissected a fetal pig and a perch.

Zoey Jensen, Katelyn Usasz, and Craytyn Wagner also helped in Courtesy Corp. Courtesy Corp is a volunteer opportunity where students help the state organization run contests. Participation in the Courtesy Corp is a volunteer position that allows

***State FFA Results continued from page 7***

students to discover new contests.

Trasa Klein and Payton Kniss attended the Nebraska FFA Delegate session. While in the Delegate session, students had the opportunity to vote on various business items and network with other FFA members throughout the state.

When students were not actively competing for the chapter, they attended keynote speakers and leadership conferences where they had the opportunity to receive leadership education training. Students also attended a career fair and college fair, where they had the opportunity to network with future colleges and employers. Students also completed a bingo card at the career and college fairs and a literacy assignment over their entire time at the state convention.

# FFA Plant Sale

Don't miss out on your chance to SAVE!



The greenhouse is full of plants, hanging baskets and vegetables which will be ready for shoppers on May 1 from 2:30-5:00pm and then again on May 2 from 9:00am - 1:00pm.




CV Freshmen entered ESU 10's Digital Citizenship Contest in which Lydia Studley received 1st place in the 9-12 Poster Division. MaKenzie Borwege, Landen Poss and Addision Ryan also received Honorable Mention! Congratulations to all!!




Landen Poss, Lydia Studley, Addison Ryan, MaKenzie Borwege




Lydia's 1st Place Poster

# Central Valley FCCLA

**Central Valley FCCLA attended State Leadership Conference March 29th-31st in Lincoln. While there they spent the time learning, competing, growing as leaders and learning more about how they can make a difference in FCCLA in their community and state and to "Flourish with Purpose."**

***Congratulations to Ethan Lobner for earning Gold in Leadership Level 2 and qualifying for Nationals.**

***Laretta Davis earned Silver in National Programs in Action Level 2**

***Neveah Vanosdall and Kerry Luscomb earned Silver in Nutrition & Wellness Level 2.**

**Laretta Davis was selected as a State SPOT officer.**

**Laretta, Ethan, and Advisor Kathleen Kennedy will attend the National Convention in Washington, D.C. in July.**

**The Chapter was also recognized for Chapter Member Increase and for Member Recruitment.**




Flourish with PURPOSE 2025-2026




STAR Medalists

Laretta Davis, Nevaeh Vanosdal, Kerry Luscomb and Ethan Lobner





State SPOT Officer Laretta Davis and Advisor Kathleen Kennedy



# Central Valley Speech SEASON FINISHED STRONG

**Central Valley Speech ended the year strong with some amazing performances and placings. We medaled 10 at Districts and Qualified 4 Events for State Speech**

## D1-4 District Speech

### Emalee Leth
Poetry:2nd-State Qualifier

### Laretta Davis
POI:2nd-State Qualifier
Serious: 2nd-State Qualifier
Humorous: 3rd-State Qualifier

### Tesla Landers
Poetry: 4th
Duet: 6th

### Ethan Lobner
POI: 5th
Serious: 5th
Duet:6th

### Alexis Gonzalez
Informative: 5th











# Central Valley Speech SEASON FINISHED STRONG

**Central Valley qualified two Competitors and 4 events for D1-State Speech held in Kearney on March 28th. As a team Central Valley placed 6th in Class D1 and Laretta Davis triple-finaled and medaled in all 3 of her events of Serious Prose, Program Oral Interp and Humorous Prose.**

**Emalee Leth qualified in Poetry for her 3rd trip to State Speech in her speech career. She did not final but did place 11th.**

**Thank you to Emalee for all her talent, leadership, and dedication the last 4 years!**

**Laretta will be representing Central Valley Speech this May at NIETOC (National Individual Enent Tournament of Champions) in Minnesota.**

**Congrats to the Cougars for an amazing Speech Season!**













Students at the elementary school have been reading books on the Golden Sower list. There are ten books on the list. Students had to read four chapter books to vote. We had fifteen students read four or more books on the Honeybee list. The top titles were *Firefly Summer, Greenwild, and Home Away From Home.* Winners will be announced in early May.

The third through sixth-grade classes had the opportunity to participate in a March Madness book bracket. Many students participated throughout the last few months. The winner was *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Partypooper.*

Library books are due May 8. Please look for lost books at home.

**Have a great summer!**

Mrs. Boyce










- Awards Night/National Honor Society Inductions on Saturday, May 2 at 7:00pm
- Elementary Track & Field Day on May 5 from 1:00-3:00pm ~ High School Track




**When:** Saturday, May 9, 2026 at 2:00pm

**Where**: Central Valley Auditorium

**Class Colors:** Hot Pink, Navy, White

**Class Flower:** Pink Carnation

**Class Motto**: Your time is limited, don't waste it living someone's else's life. ~ Steve Jobs




The Central Valley FFA would like to invite you to their annual Awards Banquet on Tuesday, May 5 at 7:00pm!! We will recognize our students' achievements this year!!



## notes from the NURSE — Mrs. Michelle Wood

The State of Nebraska requires the following for the children entering into kindergarten, seventh grade and students transferring into the state:

### KINDERGARTEN

- Physical Exam 6 months prior to entering school
- Vision Evaluation
- Up-to –date Immunization Record
- Copy of Birth Certificate with the seal

### SEVENTH GRADERS

- Physical Exam 6 months prior to entering into school
- Up-to-date Immunization Record
- 1 dose of Tdap (must contain Pertussis booster)

### TRANSFER STUDENTS INTO THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

- Physical Exam 6 months prior to entering into school
- Vision Exam
- Up-to-date Immunization Record

### STATE LAW REQUIRES STUDENTS TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING IMMUNIZATIONS

- 3 doses of DTap, DTP, DT, or Td vaccine, one given on or after the 4th birthday.
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine
- 3 doses of Pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if student is 11- 15 years of age.
- 2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month.
- 2 doses of Varicella (chicken pox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age.

Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from the parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has had varicella disease, they do not need any varicella shots.

Early Development Network

Babies Can't Wait

### Celebrating the Week of the Young Child

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.



# SCHOLARSHIPS

**THANK YOU** to the local businesses and school organizations along with private donors for sponsoring the following scholarships. Central Valley is extremely appreciative that our communities and school have continued to support our youth as they embark on their post-secondary education journey.

American Red Cross Blood Services: High School Scholarship Program

Bryan Mahrt Memorial Scholarship

Catholic Daughters of the Americas: Our Lady of Good Counsel Court #2039 Scholarship

Central Valley Education Association Scholarship

Central Valley FCCLA Scholarship

Central Valley FFA Scholarship

Central Valley Foundation Scholarship

Clarence Sautter Memorial Scholarship

Cornerstone Bank Scholarship

Dawsyn Cy Rother Memorial Scholarship

Dream Big, Word Hard, Stay Humble Sam Foltz Memorial Scholarship

Dream to Succeed Scholarship

EmRaye K. Berryman Memorial Scholarship

Greeley American Legion Auxiliary Unit #186 Scholarship

Greeley American Legion Post #186 Scholarship

Harold & Viola Rother Family Scholarship

Henderson State Bank Scholarship

Homestead Bank – Wolbach Branch Scholarship

Ida Schmidt Memorial Scholarship

Mary Haschke Memorial Scholarship

North Loup-Scotia Alumni Scholarship

North Loup American Legion Auxiliary Unit #285 Citizenship Scholarship

North Loup Lions Club Scholarship

Randy Wood Memorial Scholarship

Scotia American Legion and Auxiliary Unit #150 Scholarship

Wells Air Service Scholarship

Wolbach American Legion Auxiliary Unit #236 Scholarship

Wolbach Heritage Scholarship

# Class of 2026

**Jonathan Douglas Bernt**
*Southeast Community College ~ Lincoln*
Welding Technology

**Ky Stryker Cargill**
*Northeast Community College*
Utility Line

**Darby Randall Cook**
*Workforce*

**Thayer Erickson Davis**
*Workforce*

**Lauren Louise Diessner**
*Northeast Community College*
Ag Communications or Business

**Carter James Dunlap**
*Workforce*

**Shawn Douglas Koperski**
*Central Community College ~ Hastings*
Diesel Technology

**Emalee Ann Leth**
*Colby Community College*
Equine Science and Beef Management

**Tyler Chanse Luscomb**
*United State Marine Corps*
Infantry

**Taylor Grace McIntyre**
University of Nebraska ~ Lincoln
Undeclared

**Kristanna Violet Parson**
*Workforce*

**Caleb Anthony Studley**
*University of Nebraska at Kearney*
Sport and Recreation Management

**Hugh Kristopher Thompson**
*Workforce*

**Zavyer Geiser Wolf**
*United State Amy Reserve*
Combat Engineer

*Western Iowa Tech Community College*
Automotive Technology

**Talan Joseph Wood**
*Northeast Community College*
Electrical Construction and Control



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

## Prepare your child to manage end-of-year projects step by step



In the spring, teachers often assign long-term projects to help students apply the skills they have learned. One of those skills is time management. Reinforcing this skill at home will boost your child's ability to tackle a big project successfully.

Help your elementary schooler:

- **Think about the steps** necessary to complete the project. Ask your child questions: *Will you need to do research? What kind of outline will you use to organize your thoughts? Do you have the supplies you'll need for your poster?*
- **Block out time** on a calendar to complete each step. Students often delay starting long-term projects because they think they have lots of time. Assigning a deadline for each step and scheduling the time to do the work provides a more realistic view and helps keep students on track.
- **Plan a short break** after completing each step. Your child could enjoy a favorite healthy snack or short activity. Structured breaks allow your child to celebrate progress and build motivation for the steps ahead.

Then, as your child works on the project, monitor progress. Schedule regular times to check-in. If issues arise, help your child brainstorm solutions.

## Discuss this year and what comes next

Your child has come a long way since September—mastering new skills, reading new books and perhaps even overcoming some learning obstacles. This month, review this year's learning together and look ahead to next year.

Talk with your child about:

- **Successes.** What goals did your child accomplish? What project did your student learn the most from? What strategies did your child use effectively to handle challenges?
- **Personal growth.** How has your child changed this year? Discuss specific instances where your elementary schooler showed resilience, a positive attitude or a strong work ethic.
- **What's ahead.** What seems exciting about next year? Is there a subject your child would like to improve in or an extracurricular activity that sounds interesting?
- **A new goal.** Have your child choose something to learn this summer. Together, make a detailed plan to achieve the goal.

## Suggest a summer journal

Journaling is a low-pressure way for kids to practice writing. Themes make it fun. Encourage your child to keep:



- **A research log.** Your child could research a topic, such as *cheetahs*, and write about what they eat, their predators, how they communicate, etc.
- **A travel log.** Your child can record the sights, sounds and smells of trips around the block or farther away.
- **An observation log.** Your child can describe things in detail, and note if and how they change over time.

## Celebrate successful effort

Success in one area can motivate children to try to succeed in another. So when your child reaches a challenging goal, it's time to celebrate!



Take a picture of your child with evidence of the goal—a better report card, a finished book, etc. Frame the photo and place it by your child's bed. Seeing it and starting each day feeling like an achiever may inspire your student to work toward the next goal.

## Mix it up at reading time

Reading at home every day for at least 30 minutes supports students' skill development. Adding variety to reading time can keep your child interested. You can:

- **Read the news together.** Choose a newspaper (in print or online) with comics. Ask your child which is funniest. Then, read and discuss an article or two.
- **Take turns reading.** You could alternate pages. Or, you can read the narrative and have your child read the dialogue.
- **Encourage practical reading.** Have your child read instructions while you cook, build or repair something.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
# Helping Children Learn®
*Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School* — *May 2026*

## Q&A How can I help my child improve before next year?

**Q: My fourth grader is barely passing. I know my child needs help or next year will be worse, but I can't afford a tutor. What can I do now and over the summer to help my child catch up?**



**A:** There are ways to help your child have a better year in fifth grade, and you are right to start now.

To get your child back on track:

- **Talk with the teacher** as soon as possible. Find out what specific areas your child struggles with. Ask what resources are available through the school to help your student strengthen those skills, now and over the summer. Can the teacher recommend educational apps and strategies you can use at home? Together, lay out a summer learning plan.
- **Rule out possible medical causes.** Have your child's vision and hearing tested.
- **Schedule time each day** for your child to work on school skills.
- **Reinforce your child's sense of competence.** Offer reminders of past learning successes, particularly those that involved effort.
- **Have fun learning together** this summer. Visit museums and historic sites. Attend a free concert. Go on nature hikes and try to identify things you see. New experiences strengthen your child's foundation for learning.

## Parent Quiz Are you committed to summer safety?

Fun outdoor activities make summer special. Taking safety precautions keeps the focus on the fun. Are you doing all you can to ensure your child's health and safety during the summer? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you have** your child put on sunscreen and insect protection when playing outside?
2. **Do you require** your child to wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard?
3. **Do you make sure** that your child is closely supervised when playing in or near water?
4. **Do you give** your child plenty of water to drink when playing or exercising in the heat?
5. **Do you sign** your child up for supervised activities that provide active, interesting things to do?

**How well are you doing?**

*More* yes *answers mean you are helping your child enjoy the summer safely. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"When the sun is shining I can do anything; no mountain is too high, no trouble too difficult to overcome."
—Wilma Rudolph

## Plan a summer of learning

Summer offers countless opportunities for children to learn in ways that don't feel like school. To promote learning all season:



1. **Grow a garden** together. Choosing, planting and caring for plants is a hands-on way to practice science, math and reasoning skills.
2. **Have a weekly game night.** Choose board games that involve reading, math and strategic thinking.
3. **Sign up for a reading program** at the library. These often include read-alouds, contests, book clubs and crafts.

## Hold on to helpful routines

Keeping up some routines at home over the summer will make it easier for your child to readjust when school resumes in the fall. Maintain routines for:

- **Sleeping.** Bed and wake times can be slightly later, but stick to a schedule.
- **Reading.** Make time for it every day.
- **A daily family meal.**
- **Screen use.** Maintain limits and encourage healthy, active alternatives.

## Promote community service

In a community—whether it's a family, a school or a city—members have responsibilities to others. Help your child learn about giving back by including volunteering in your summer plans. Your family could:

- **Participate in a clean-up effort** on your street or at a local park.
- **Fight hunger.** Your family may be able to collect food or assemble bags of supplies for a food bank or meal program.
- **Make greeting cards** to send to elderly or housebound neighbors.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

# Helping Students Learn®

*Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School* May 2026

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

## Renew your child's motivation to concentrate on learning



If your middle schooler is more focused on summer break than schoolwork, offer a reminder: Summer isn't here yet, and the last few weeks of school are just as important as the rest. To end the school year strong, your child will have to stay focused.

To support and motivate your student:

- **Show interest** in what your child is learning. By this point, you may be familiar with what goes on in your child's classes. But don't stop asking about what your middle schooler is reading, discussing and doing at school. Focus conversations on learning, not just test scores and grades.
- **Discuss expectations.** Make it clear that you expect your child's best effort in school through the last day. Review the consequences for failing to complete assignments or study for tests.
- **Maintain routines.** With more daylight, your child may be tempted to put off schoolwork until later at night. But school starts at the same time in the morning, and students need enough sleep to focus in class.
- **Review time management strategies.** Help your child make every remaining day count by putting deadlines on a calendar and scheduling time to do the work to meet them.

## Help your child sharpen study skills

Students who don't know how to study effectively sometimes spend more time than they need to on schoolwork. Some get so frustrated that they stop studying completely. Encourage your child to put these strategies to use:

- **Remove distractions.** Loud music and digital devices not needed for schoolwork should be turned off. Have your child take care of hunger and thirst before sitting down to study.
- **Take careful class notes,** and include details the teacher emphasizes. Reviewing and clarifying notes each evening will make the material easier to remember.
- **Study material** in several short sessions, rather than one long one. During a session, alternate types of material. For example, between studying math and science formulas, your child can study English or history.
- **Avoid getting sidetracked.** Your child can jot down random thoughts on a pad to look at later, then return quickly to studying.

## Expand word knowledge



Understanding the meaning of reading material is easier when students are familiar with the words. To help your child build a strong vocabulary now and over the summer:

- **Maintain a daily** reading time. Encourage your child to read about a broad range of topics and create a log of new words and meanings.
- **Introduce new words** in conversations with your child. "Let's *collaborate* on this. We do well when we work together."
- **Encourage practice.** Challenge your child to use a new word or two every day.

## Support setback recovery

The ability to recover after disappointments and setbacks is essential for learning. When something at school has gone wrong, help your child express feelings in words, and offer sympathy. Then, make it clear that your child has the power to change things for the better. Ask questions like, *What else could you do now?* and *What could you do differently next time?*

## Suggest fun things to write



To foster an interest in writing, help your child discover two things about it: Writing has a purpose, and it can be a lot of fun! Have your child try writing:

- **Product reviews.** Would your child recommend a product to others? Why or why not?
- **Letters to officials** about issues that interest your middle schooler.
- **Fan fiction.** Your child can choose favorite media characters and write a new story to share with other fans.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL
# Helping Students Learn®
*Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School* — May 2026

## Q&A How can I ease my child's high school jitters?

**Q: My eighth grader is happy in middle school, but is nervous about starting high school next year. How can I make this move seem less overwhelming?**



**A:** Feeling a bit anxious before a move up to a new school is natural. Preparing and practicing skills in the months to come will help your child feel capable of handling this change.

To support your rising ninth grader:

- **Listen and ask questions** to help identify the specific things that are worrying your child, so you can address the right things. You might learn that your child is more concerned about making new friends and joining activities than handling more schoolwork, for example.
- **Develop familiarity** with the high school. Check out the school's website and social media posts together. Learn about school policies and procedures your child will be expected to follow. Arrange a visit, if possible, and find out what types of activities welcome ninth graders.
- **Reinforce school skills.** High school *does* mean a bigger workload and more commitments. This summer, have your child keep track of activities and responsibilities on a calendar and get in the habit of making daily to-do lists. Encourage your child to rework some of this year's assignments.

## Parent Quiz — Are you planning for summer safety?

When school is out, students aren't always within sight of an adult. Summer fun can turn risky. Are you taking steps to make sure your child stays healthy and safe over the summer? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you search** for supervised activities that will keep your child busy and active?
2. **Do you think** about your child's maturity level and abilities before assigning chores such as mowing the lawn with a ride-on mower?
3. **Do you provide** sunscreen and insect protection and insist that your child use them outdoors?
4. **Do you remind** your child to drink plenty of water when playing, working or exercising outdoors in the heat?
5. **Do you require** your child to wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard?

**How well are you doing?**

*More* yes *answers mean you are helping your child have a safe summer. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"Safety is a choice you make every day."
—Unknown

## Explore options for service

Community service helps middle schoolers consider the needs and viewpoints of people around them. At the same time, they gain skills and learn that they can make a difference. Over the summer, your child may be able to volunteer to:

- **Tutor** a younger child in math or reading.
- **Organize** a collection of toiletries to donate to a shelter.
- **Participate** in a neighborhood clean-up.
- **Help** a local family by offering babysitting or dog-walking services.
- **Visit** a retirement home and spend time talking with the residents.

## How to be an influencer

Positive family influence supports student success. Here are a few simple but vital ways to influence your middle schooler:



- **Get to know** what makes your child tick and find ways to support interests.
- **Look for opportunities** to offer your child genuine, specific praise.
- **Take your child seriously.** Listen to and consider opinions and concerns.

## Summertime is family time

Make the most of your child's time at home this summer to strengthen family ties. To add quality to your time together:

- **Use warm, light evenings** to exercise outdoors. Or just take a walk, and enjoy each other's company and conversation.
- **Ask your child to plan** free or low-cost weekend activities to do as a family.
- **Have family members** take photos to record your summer. Spend time together writing captions and making a slide show.

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HIGH SCHOOL

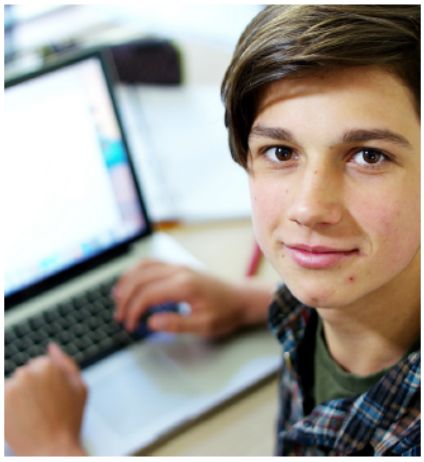
# Helping Students Learn®

*Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School* May 2026

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

## Help your teen maintain focus through the last day of school

Summer is approaching, but it isn't here yet. High school students are still busy learning new material, completing end-of-year projects and reviewing for final tests.



To help your student stay on track, emphasize that school is a priority through the last day. Encourage your teen to:

- **Make time every day** for schoolwork *and* studying. As well as completing assignments, your teen should allow time to commit the material to memory and practice recalling it.
- **Plan ahead and use time wisely.** Now is not the time to put things off to the last minute. Help your teen break big tasks down into more manageable parts and schedule time to do each one.
- **Take brain breaks.** Suggest that your teen take a 10-minute break after every one hour of work. Breaks help prevent burnout.
- **Tackle problems as they arise.** Is your teen worried about a grade in a class, or struggling with a particular assignment? Tell your teen to reach out to the teacher for advice rather than just hoping for the best. Taking action immediately allows your student to use all the time available to make necessary improvements.

## Get a summer start on college essays

Students who will be applying to college in the fall can do themselves a favor this summer. Most applications require written essays. Writing them while classes are out will reduce your teen's stress in the fall. Share these four tips:

1. **Start early.** Some colleges require two or more essays. More than 1,000 schools, however, use the Common Application, which lets students write one essay to submit to multiple schools. Visit www.commonapp.org to check out the 2026-27 essay prompts.
2. **Be authentic.** It's important for teens to write essays that show how they think and what they care about. Having family members or AI write essays is never OK.
3. **Answer the question.** The essay should tell your teen's story, but must also address the prompt.
4. **Allow time for rewriting.** After writing a few drafts this summer, your teen can get feedback from a trusted teacher in the fall.

Source: "Advice from Undergraduate Admissions Officers," Purdue OWL, Purdue University.

## Promote outdoor activities

Nature inspires wonder. And research shows it can also boost teens' mood and learning. Encourage your teen to try these activities:



- **Identify plants** and animals using a field guide or an app, such as Seek.
- **Go on a photo** scavenger hunt. Suggest making a list of items to take pictures of: a cumulous cloud, a spider web, a tree's shadow, etc.
- **Make a sundial** using sidewalk chalk. Have your teen research how.

Source: K. Weir, "Nurtured by Nature," *Monitor on Psychology*, American Psychological Association.

## Talk about tough decisions

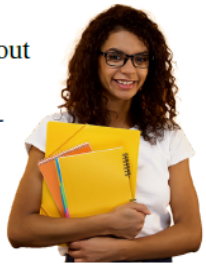
When it is tempting to do the wrong thing, it's vital for your teen to be prepared to do the right thing. Talk together about situations that call for making tough choices: *If a friend asked for a test answer when the teacher was out of the room, would you give it?*

Explain that even minor choices—like hitting the snooze button and missing first period—can have big consequences. Making the right choice may seem hard, but your teen will have an easier time in the future.

Source: S. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, Simon & Schuster.

## Advise exam preparation

Many high schoolers will take final exams in the weeks to come. Help your student get a jump start on studying. Recommend that your teen:



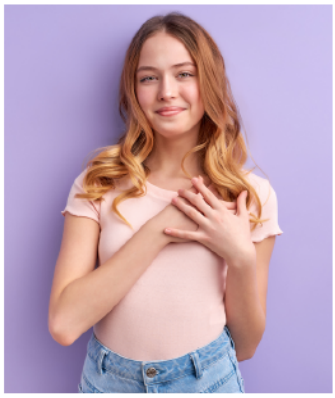
1. **Talk** with teachers about what will be covered.
2. **Organize** materials—assignments, quizzes, handouts, etc.
3. **Schedule** study time on a calendar.

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HIGH SCHOOL
# Helping Students Learn®
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## Q&A My teen acts so entitled. How can I change this?

**Q: No matter what I do for my teen, it never seems to be enough. How can I get my teen to be more appreciative and stop taking people and things for granted?**



**A:** Gratitude strengthens relationships, reduces depression and lessens anxiety. It is also linked to academic achievement. Students who practice gratitude tend to be more engaged and motivated—which can result in a deeper understanding of the material.

To foster a grateful attitude in your teen:

- **Focus attention** on all the necessities your teen and your family have. Help your teen think about what life might be like for others who have less. Downplay family discussions of material possessions.
- **Separate privileges and gifts** from rights.
- **Be a role model.** Let your teen see you thanking people and returning favors. Thank your teen for things, too.
- **Point out kind gestures.** Note how wonderful it was for someone to take the time to do something nice.
- **Start a weekly tradition** of sharing gratitude. Pick a regular night to have everyone at the dinner table say what they were grateful for in the last week.

## Parent Quiz Are you stressing the value of effort?

With effort, your teen is capable of achieving "personal bests" in every school subject. Are you teaching your teen that when students work hard, they get more out of school? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you compliment** your teen's positive work habits? "It's great you are starting right in on your project. You're making the most of your time."
2. **Do you notice** and celebrate the progress your teen makes?
3. **Do you encourage** your teen to take pride in doing a good job? "It must feel great knowing the work you put into your paper was worth it. It is so persuasive."
4. **Do you lead** by example and put diligent effort into your work?
5. **Do you pay** more attention to effort and learning than grades?

### How well are you doing?

*More* yes *answers mean you are nurturing your teen's motivation to strive. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"Give your best effort, because you are worth your best effort."
—Denis Waitely

## Fill summer with learning

It's OK to give your teen a week or so to relax after school lets out for the summer. Then, show your teen that learning never stops! To reinforce skills in:



- **Writing:** Suggest that your teen pick a new skill to learn and record progress in a journal.
- **History:** Ask your teen to research past events or notable people that have changed your community.
- **Science:** Challenge your teen to plant and care for a garden. This requires learning what plants need to grow well.

## Stick with basic routines

Keeping up with a few basic routines over the summer develops teens' self-discipline and sense of responsibility—and makes readjusting to school easier in the fall. Retain routines for:

- **Sleeping.** Bedtime and rising time can be a little later, but stick to a schedule.
- **Exercise.** Plan for at least one hour a day.
- **Screen use.** More free time should not mean more time spent passively scrolling.

## Suggest fun ways to read

Reading for pleasure daily this summer will help your teen maintain literacy skills and school readiness. To encourage it:

- **Show you understand** that your teen is maturing by sharing and discussing articles on more grown-up topics.
- **Be reading "tourists."** Browse libraries, thrift stores and yard sales in nearby towns for interesting titles.
- **Hold a summer "film series."** Take turns choosing a book that has a movie version. After everyone reads the book, pop some popcorn and watch the movie.

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