JEFFERSON JOURNAL

NOVEMBER 2026

- **2nd-** PTO meeting at 4:15 pm
- **5th-** 12:20 early dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- **10th**- PTO Turkey Bingo from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm @ Codington Extension Building
- **19th**- 4th grade music concert at 6 pm at Jefferson
- **25th- 27th-**Thanksgiving Break (no school)

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

First, thank you for allowing staff to have time to professionally grow and learn this past October in-service. Staff were reacquainted with Boys Town expectations and interactions under the guidance of Mr. Tim Kruse. Mr. Kruse is the current Technology Director and the former administrator at the Watertown Intermediate School. He was also an educator at Boys Town for years. His knowledge shared helped to support staff's daily interactions with student behaviors. It also reaffirmed the proper means to interact with elevated behaviors and how to de-escalate.

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

Second, staff spent time developing grade level and department norms and commitments to our school's PLC process. The Watertown School District has implemented the PLC Process in ALL of the schools. This process is centered on collaborative and constructive use of time that ensures that all students can learn at high levels of achievement. Jefferson currently has a guided coalition team, called The Compass Team, that meets twice monthly and is formulating our school's philosophy. All of this focuses on THREE BIG IDEAS and FOUR GUIDING QUESTIONS. We will continue to update you on this process throughout the year.

90% ATTENDANCE

At the end of each quarter, we will calculate the students' attendance percentage and if they are above 90% they will receive a magnet to take home. Studies have shown that when students are in school over 90% of the school year, they achieve greater. That means missing fewer than 18 days the entire school year. We are hoping that we can do even better than that. Our yearly average per student is approximately 97%. It also sets good habits for life. ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Attendance Traveling Trophy

We will continue our monthly challenge of rewarding the classroom from each grade level with a traveling trophy filled with their favorite candies. October's winner were:

1st- Dr. Tisher
2nd- Mrs. Nelson
3rd- Mrs. Butler
4th- Mrs. Hogue and winner of donut party!

Lastly, thank you for attending your children's conference. Your involvement demonstrates your commitment to the value of education and that it takes a team, a village, to raise a child. Thank you. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!!

Sincerely,

John J. Decker
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605-882-6390

PLC PROCESS

Three BIG Ideas

A FOCUS on LEARNING

Every student learns at high levels; the fundamental purpose of our work is learning, not merely teaching.

A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Educators work in independent teams that take collective responsibility for student learning.

A FOCUS ON RESULTS

We judge our effectiveness by evidence of student learning, and we use that evidence to improve.

PLC PROCESS

Four Guiding Questions

What is it we want our students to know and be able to do?

Have we identified the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions each student is to acquire as a result of each unit of instruction?

How will we know if each student has learned it?

Are we using formative assessment in our classrooms on an ongoing basis? Are we gathering evidence of student learning through one or more team-developed common formative assessments for each unit of instruction?

How will we respond when some students do not learn it?

Can we identify students who need additional time and support by the student, by the standard, and for every unit of instruction? Do we use evidence of student learning from common formative assessments to analyze and improve out individual and collective instructional practice?

How will we extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

Can we identify students who have reached identified learning targets to extend their learning?

NURSE NOTES

Should Student stay home or go home?

Stay in school:

- Cold symptoms without a fever
- Cough without a fever
- Diarrhea without a fever
- Head Lice up to the Nurse/ Principal will decide
- Pink eye unless a dr note states differently
- Rash unless it is oozing or a fever

Go home:

- Fever of 100 or more
- Vomitting

**** These symptoms are not absolute indicators. Discretion will also be used when determining whether a student should remain in class or be sent home.**

PEANUT SAFE SCHOOL

We are a Peanut Safe facility. This means that we do NOT serve anything with peanuts due to the vast number of students with some type of peanut allergy ranging from minor to life-threatening. We cannot control what students may bring for lunch, but we do ask that if your child/children only eat Peanut Butter sandwiches, please make the teacher aware, so if any classmates are allergic to peanuts, we can make sure they are placed safely apart. We also ask that if you bring treats for the class, to be mindful of any fellow classmates that may have an allergy and choose something peanut free. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ann, the school nurse at Jefferson.



(Oct 26th-Nov 6th)



(Nov 9th- 24th)



1. Look at the person
2. Use a clear, pleasant voice
3. Explain exactly what you are asking for. Say "Please".
4. If "yes", say "Thank you"
5.If "No", say "Ok"

Family Routines That Nurture a Child's Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be developed through effort, persistence, and learning from mistakes. Here' show to nurture this at home.

For Younger Kids

1. Celebrate the process, whether it's practicing reading or learning to ride a bike.
2. Normalize mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Encourage persistence through play, with games, building blocks, and art projects.
4. Teach positive self-talk. Help your child replace "I can't do this" with "I can't do this yet.
5. Provide opportunities where effort is valued over perfection.

For Older Kids

1. Encourage your child to set small, achievable goals in schoolwork or hobbies.
2. When they face challenges, remind them that effort builds skills.
3. Support independent problem-solving by guiding them to brainstorm strategies.
4. Encourage journaling to write affirmations or reflect on challenges they overcame.
5. Model persistence by sharing how you worked hard to achieve something.

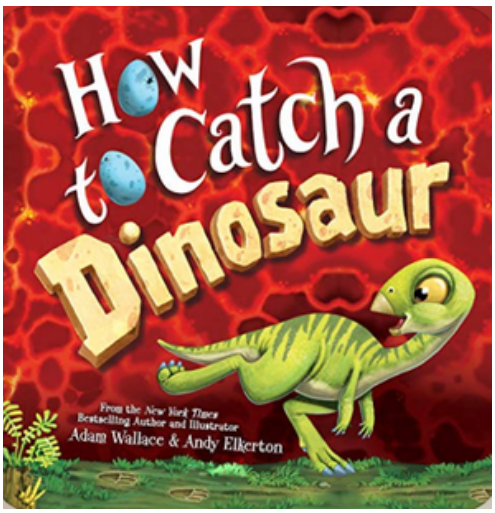
SCHOLASTIC BOOK OF THE MONTH

How to Catch a Dinosaur by Adam Wallace and Andy Elkerton

Do YOU have what it takes to catch a prehistoric pal?

This newest installment in the New York Times and USA Today bestselling series is sure to delight every dinosaur fan!

Can you catch a dinosaur and prove they're still around? Use your brain and set your traps to get that dino found!





Counselor's Corner
with Mrs. Flemming



The Attitude Of Gratitude

"Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other." — Randy Rausch

The Attitude of Gratitude mindset teaches us the importance of looking for the positives from every experience and being thankful for all that we have. Through this mindset, we learn that we can use the good times or the challenging moments of our lives as the foundation on which to build. Gratitude isn't something we just know how to recognize instinctively. It's something we begin learning about as children and it has both short and long-term impacts. Studies have shown children who are taught to be grateful experience less stress, perform better in school, have increased happiness in school and experience good relationships with their friends. Learning to be grateful helps children learn how to be empathetic and can boost their overall levels of happiness. It also helps them to learn how to look at the positives instead of the negatives and it is actually believed to be one of the healthiest emotions that human beings can practice.

Tips and Tricks on how we can help children practice gratitude:

1. Start with the please and thank you:

Manners are the first step in the process. They help children begin to recognize when kindness has been shown to them, the importance of appreciating whatever comes their way, and that we are not entitled to things. Say "please" and "thank you" when you make requests to your children. Incorporate language in daily conversation that encourages the value of gratitude such as, "We're so lucky to have a park to play at," or "I really appreciate when you listen."

Ways to model gratitude might include saying thank you to people who serve you at a grocery store or at a restaurant, showing appreciation for a kind gesture by giving a hug in return, or asking your child to help write thank you notes after receiving gifts.

2. Teach children the act of kindness:

Demonstrate what thankfulness and gratitude look like. You are the best inspiration for your children so if they see you do kind things, they will pick up on them. In a world that can be so dark and cruel at times, children need to learn at a young age that a kind act can go a long way. Explain to children that there are many ways to be kind, such as

by using manners, sharing, giving compliments, helping someone in need, being a good friend, lending a listening ear, and looking after the environment.
One of the best and quickest ways to feel better and become happier is to do something for someone else. And the easiest as well as one of the most powerful things we can do for someone is express gratitude for who they are and what they mean to us. Showing appreciation for someone provides two wonderful gifts: it makes the other person feel good, and makes us happy at the same time!

3. Help them to pick out something amazing about their day:

Practice the Attitude of Gratitude. Teach children that the little things can mean a lot and even in the ordinary, there can still be something special. This could be things like seeing a beautiful sunset, creating beautiful art work, finishing a book, or overcoming a challenge. The appreciation of the simpler things will help children to see the beauty in each new day which will help them to become mindful human beings.

4. Make time to share gratitude:

Put some time aside to spend with your child to share what you are thankful for at the end of each day. There are so many ways this can be done, whether it's during bedtime routine, sitting together at the dinner table, or reflecting at the end of a week. The more children practice gratitude, the more it begins to become part of their everyday life.

5. Complete gratitude activities:

Plan family activities that encourage thankfulness. Ideas such as making a gratitude jar, donating together, and other ways to engage children in practicing daily gratitude. These activities provide children with the opportunity to be creative with their gratitude, while providing time to reflect on their lives. Journals are also a great tool for practicing gratitude and, it can be words, drawing, or coloring pictures!

6. Encourage children to always look on the positive side of things:

People who have achieved great lives point to moments of adversity and challenges when they learned a lesson or built a life skill that allowed them to be successful. Knowing this, we understand why it is important to seek the positives from all situations, even those that seem completely negative. By helping your child see the good side of things, even in difficult situations, their mindset will begin to shift from positive to negative.

Gratitude won't just happen immediately, to change our mindset, we must keep practicing the skill. Teaching gratitude is a journey, and it's never too late to start. By fostering this mindset, you are contributing to the development of happier, more appreciative individuals.

PARENT RESOURCES



HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PROFILE.PHP?ID=61556781784403

SOUTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CENTER

HTTPS://SDSFEC.ORG/

PTO JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/781453261913514

Parent Guidance.org

PARENTGUIDANCE.ORG

PBS KIDS FOR PARENTS

HTTPS://WWW.PBS.ORG/PARENTS

CODINGTONCONNECTS

HTTPS://CODINGTONCONNECTS.COM/



HTTPS://SAFE2SAY.SD.GOV

Winter Weather Decisions: How Watertown Schools Make the Call
by Dr. Jeff Danielsen, Superintendent

As we approach the winter season in northeastern South Dakota, I want to take a moment to explain how decisions are made regarding late starts, early dismissals, and school cancellations due to winter weather. As Superintendent, your child's safety is my highest priority. We take these decisions seriously and carefully consider the weather conditions, road conditions, and forecasts before determining whether school can safely be held. We monitor several television stations, drive both city and rural roads, and consult with the National Weather Service to gather as much information as possible. Although we make every effort to reach the best decision, weather forecasts are not always 100% accurate, and conditions can change quickly. I also recognize that families may not always agree with a weather-related decision. If you feel conditions are unsafe for your child, you may keep your child home or pick them up from school early.

Late Starts
Late starts are called for two primary reasons: to allow additional time for road crews to clear snow and improve road conditions, and to give us more time to evaluate the weather forecast. On a normal school day, our bus drivers are ready to begin their routes around 6:30–6:45 a.m. With a 10:30 a.m. late start, drivers can delay their routes until approximately 8:30–8:45 a.m., allowing additional daylight for road crews to begin plowing and improving conditions on both city and rural roads. A late start also gives us additional time to monitor the weather and determine whether conditions are expected to improve enough to safely begin school at 10:30 a.m. If conditions are not improving or the forecast indicates that travel will remain unsafe, we may change the decision to a school cancellation. I understand that late starts can create challenges for families, particularly when arranging childcare. Please know that the additional time is used to evaluate conditions and make the safest decision possible for our students and staff.

Early Dismissals
Early dismissals during the winter months are primarily used to help students get home safely during daylight hours before weather conditions deteriorate. Depending on the circumstances, we may dismiss school at 12:30, 1:30, or 2:30 p.m. The dismissal time depends on the forecast, current road conditions, and how quickly we anticipate conditions may worsen. Our goal is to get students home safely before snow, wind, or other hazardous conditions make travel more difficult.

School Cancellations
School may be canceled when road conditions make it too difficult to transport students safely on our buses, even if roads within Watertown appear to be in better condition. We may also cancel school when the forecast indicates that weather conditions are expected to worsen throughout the day. The decision-making process often begins around 4:30–5:00 a.m. Several of us evaluate road conditions in town and in the surrounding rural areas. We also consult with meteorologists in Aberdeen regarding expected snowfall, wind speeds, and other weather conditions. We use the information available to us to make the best decision possible. Unfortunately, weather predictions are not always exact, and conditions may change after a decision has been announced.

What About Extremely Cold Temperatures?
Cold temperatures are another concern during northeastern South Dakota winters. Our district generally does not cancel school solely because of cold temperatures unless the actual air temperature reaches approximately 25–30 degrees below zero. Our school buses are equipped with heating systems and can operate safely in very cold conditions, provided temperatures remain within the range considered manageable for our equipment. Wind chill is an important consideration for students outdoors, but it does not affect the mechanical operation of our buses in the same way it affects people. We also keep our school buildings open for students on extremely cold days. Students will not be expected to wait outside in bus lines or spend time on playgrounds in those conditions. I recognize that media coverage sometimes creates the impression that schools should close whenever temperatures become extremely cold. However, northeastern South Dakota is accustomed to extended periods of winter weather, and canceling school for every day of extreme cold could mean missing two or three weeks of school over the winter. That is why we use the actual air temperature, along with other safety considerations, when making these decisions. If your child walks to school, please plan ahead during periods of extreme cold. Consider reaching out to neighbors or friends to arrange a ride. Most importantly, please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for winter weather, including a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, and appropriate boots. If you believe the weather is too dangerous for your child, you may keep your child home. We will never ask you to disregard your concerns about your child's safety.

How Will Families Be Notified?
We make every effort, barring technical difficulties, to communicate weather-related decisions as quickly as possible through local television stations, radio stations, the district website, and phone notifications. To help ensure you receive these important announcements, please make sure your contact information is current with your child's school. Updated phone numbers and other contact information are essential when weather-related decisions must be communicated early in the morning or on short notice. Families are also encouraged to follow the Watertown School District's website and Facebook page for district announcements and updates.

Our Commitment to Student Safety
I hope this information helps families better understand the thought process behind late starts, early dismissals, school cancellations, and decisions involving extreme cold. These decisions are never taken lightly. We understand the impact they have on students, parents, staff, and the community, and we do our best to balance the need for students to attend school with the responsibility to keep them safe. As your Superintendent, I take that responsibility very seriously. Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and continued support as we navigate another South Dakota winter together.

NOVEMBER 2026

MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
FRUIT AND MILK IS OFFERED AT ALL BREAKFAST MEALS
VEGGIE BAR, FRUIT SELECTION AND MILK SELECTION ARE OFFERED AT ALL LUNCH MEALS.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
WEEK 4				
2 BREAKFAST: CHOC. MUFFIN 29G GOGURT 8G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: PANCAKE 13G/26G OMELET FRUIT JUICE 15G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	3 BREAKFAST: APPLE FILLED DONUT 33G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: TOTCHO 16G CHURRO 25G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	4 BREAKFAST: PANCAKE STICK 17G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: BREADED CHICKEN SANDWICH 44G BAKED BEANS 30G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	5 BREAKFAST: CC FRENCH TST 37G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: PIZZA CRUNCHERS 21G/42G MARINARA CUP 7G GREEN BEANS 4G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	6 BREAKFAST: CARAMEL MINI 41G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN CUBES W/ GRAVY MASHED POTATOES 20G DINNER ROLL 23G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
WEEK 5				
9 BREAKFAST: MINI DONUTS 41G GOGURT 8G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: HAMBURGER 28G BAKED BEANS 30G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	10 BREAKFAST: FR. TST STIX 38G SAUSAGE PATTY H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CRISPITOS 23G/46G HASH BROWN COINS 21G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	11 BREAKFAST: BR. BURRITO 29G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: ORANGE CHICKEN 26G FRIED RICE 27G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	12 BREAKFAST: BB MINI PANCAKE ?G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN TENDERS 12G/18G MASHED POTATO/GRAVY 24G DINNER ROLL 23G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	13 BREAKFAST: BREAD LOAF 34G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: SPAGHETTI 36G GREEN BEANS 4G GARLIC TOAST 24G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
WEEK 6				
16 BREAKFAST: FRUDEL 38G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: MINI CORN DOGS 20G/30G MAC & CHEESE ?G FR. FRUIT CUP 21G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	17 BREAKFAST: FUNNEL CAKE 38G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: QUESIDILLA 33G FIESTA BEANS 17G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	18 BREAKFAST: BREAKFAST SAND. 24G/34G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHICKEN DRUMMIES 6G CHICKEN NUGGETS 13G/16G WEDGES 20G/BISCUIT 24G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	19 BREAKFAST: STR. MINI BAGEL 42G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: WAFFLES ?G SAUSAGE LINKS 4G JUICE CUP 15G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK	20 BREAKFAST: BANANA MUFFIN 31G STRING CHEESE 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: LASAGNA ROLL UP 22G/42G MIXED VEGGIES 12G PLAIN BREADSTICK 14G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK
C. CHOICE				
23 BREAKFAST: COOKS CHOICE H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: COOKS CHOICE CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGIES CHOICE MILK	24 BREAKFAST: COOKS CHOICE H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: COOKS CHOICE CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGIES CHOICE MILK	25 NO SCHOOL 	26 NO SCHOOL 	27 NO SCHOOL
WEEK 1				
30 BREAKFAST: CEREAL/CEREAL BAR 23G YOGURT CUP 15G H.S./M.S. VARIETY BREAKFAST CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE MILK LUNCH: CHEESEBURGER 28G FRIES 16G CHOICE FRUIT CHOICE VEGGIES CHOICE MILK				