



THUNDERBIRD NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025 & JANUARY 2026

Winter Weather Season



SUPERINTENDENT MONTHLY UPDATE

BY JON H. ROTHER

Volume 19

Issue 5

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As Nebraskans, we often come to appreciate the four distinct seasons of the year. Albeit, some years summer and winter seem to linger longer than I might like. December through March (and sometimes April) can bring with it rain, sleet, ice and snow. I love snow! But, now as a school superintendent, I would prefer it only snowed on the weekends. I do enjoy a good winter school day with snow on the ground, the pavement cleared and dry, not a sign of ice on any of the walkways or roadways and all the teachers and students cozy and dry in the school buildings! But, those don't come very often.

As we move into the winter season, we will want our families and staff to be informed of any weather (or otherwise) related school closings, late starts or early dismissals. I do my best to make decisions about these events prior to 9:00 PM. The decision is based on National Weather Service reports and information from the county roads department about the road conditions. Although some highways or city streets may be ready for travel, county roads may not be cleared for school buses to safely traverse. The opposite is also sometimes true. There are also instances where roads are not cleared in time for school, but may be cleared in time for evening events.

In order to stay informed of school schedule changes, please make sure your information in PowerSchool and Remind is up-to-date. Should you have any issues with communication through Remind, please contact any school office.

WOWT - First Alert 6 - www.wowt.com

KOLN/KGIN - 10/11 Now - <https://www.1011now.com/>

KNCY - News Channel Nebraska - <https://rivercountry.newschannelnebraska.com>

KLKN - Nebraska Now - <https://www.klkntv.com/>

KETV - Omaha 7 ABC - <https://www.ketv.com/>

Johnson County Central Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/johnsoncountycentral/>

Cook Counseling Update - Mr. Hedger

Therapy is for the dogs.

If you have a middle school student, you have probably heard murmurings about a dog on campus. Karch is a ten-year-old border collie that I have had since he was a puppy. When I found out that I would be moving to the middle school to become the school counselor, I knew I wanted to get Karch certified to be a therapy dog. From his youth, he has been incredibly loyal, gentle, and obedient. I knew he would have the perfect temperament to make an excellent therapy dog. Already, Karch has been such an asset to the students at JCC middle school, and I am excited to see how he will continue to help the students in our building. Karch is the first therapy dog at JCC, and I wanted to talk about some frequently asked questions.

Did he have to go through training to become a therapy dog? What is that process like? Yes, Karch went through three different courses through Uplifting Paws based out of Lincoln, Nebraska. Each course was six weeks long, one course per week. At the end of each course, Karch had to pass a test in order to move onto the next course. The courses he has passed include the following: Canine Good Citizen, Canine Good Citizen Advanced, and Community Canine. He is a certified therapy dog through Uplifting Paws and is insured through their organization. He will have to get recertified every three years.



What does he do during the day?

Karch is with me throughout the day unless I am running around the building. His main purpose is to be present when students come into my office to talk or because of behavior issues. He has been incredibly helpful with helping students deescalate after a meltdown. It is amazing how quickly some kids can calm down in the presence of a gentle dog. It has been incredibly helpful in my new position to have Karch as a means of making connections with students who are new to me. He also goes with me whenever I do guidance lessons with various classes/grades.

Karch? Where did you get that name? Karch is named after the legendary Karch Kiraly. He is currently the US Men's Volleyball National Team coach. He has won a gold medal himself as an indoor volleyball player, beach volleyball player, and coach of the US Women's National Team. Unfortunately, Karch the dog has not taken on the volleyball prowess of his namesake.

Is Karch a service animal? Service animals are different in nature than therapy dogs. Service animals are typically trained specifically to assist one person or family with a specific need generally related to medical issues. Generally, it is frowned upon to pet service animals when seen out in public. Therapy dogs are trained for more general purposes. It is generally encouraged for people to pet therapy dogs although it is always polite to ask in advance.

High School News

From Principal Justin Damme

As we approach the end of the calendar year and look ahead to a new one, I want to express my gratitude for your continued partnership and support. December and January are special months filled with celebration, reflection, and exciting new beginnings. I am proud of the hard work our students and staff have shown, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together.



Academic

With the semester wrapping up, teachers have been working diligently to assess student progress. We encourage families to take time to review progress with your child, celebrate successes, and set positive goals for the months ahead. Please remind your student(s) to continue to work hard and keep up with their school work.

Students who are interested in changing their classes for the second semester need to see Mrs. Reuter by the end of the day on Friday, December 19, 2025. Students need to complete a schedule change form and have the counselor, teachers, and parents sign it before officially changing classes. Students will also have five school days to make changes to their class schedule at the beginning of the second semester, from Tuesday, January 6, 2026, to Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

Attendance Matters

As we enter the colder months, please remember the importance of consistent attendance. Will illnesses do occur, we ask that families make every effort to have students in class each day they are healthy. Every day of learning makes a difference.

As we prepare for winter break, we hope all our families enjoy a restful and safe holiday season. This is a wonderful time to recharge and enjoy quality family time.

Important Dates Coming Up

- December 3, 2025 – High School Winter Concert @ Tecumseh Auditorium – 7 pm
- December 3, 2025 – District One-Act @ Centennial – 11:15 am
- December 19, 2025 – 2nd Quarter/1st Semester Ends
- December 24-December 28, 2025 – NSAA Winter Moratorium
- January 6, 2026 – 3rd Quarter/2nd Semester Begins
- January 14, 2026 – Senior Breakfast Scholarship Meeting with JCC Foundation – 8 am

Please check the school calendar for more information on activities and events

If you ever have any questions or would like to speak with me, please feel free to contact me at justin.damme@jccentral.org or by calling 402-335-3328.



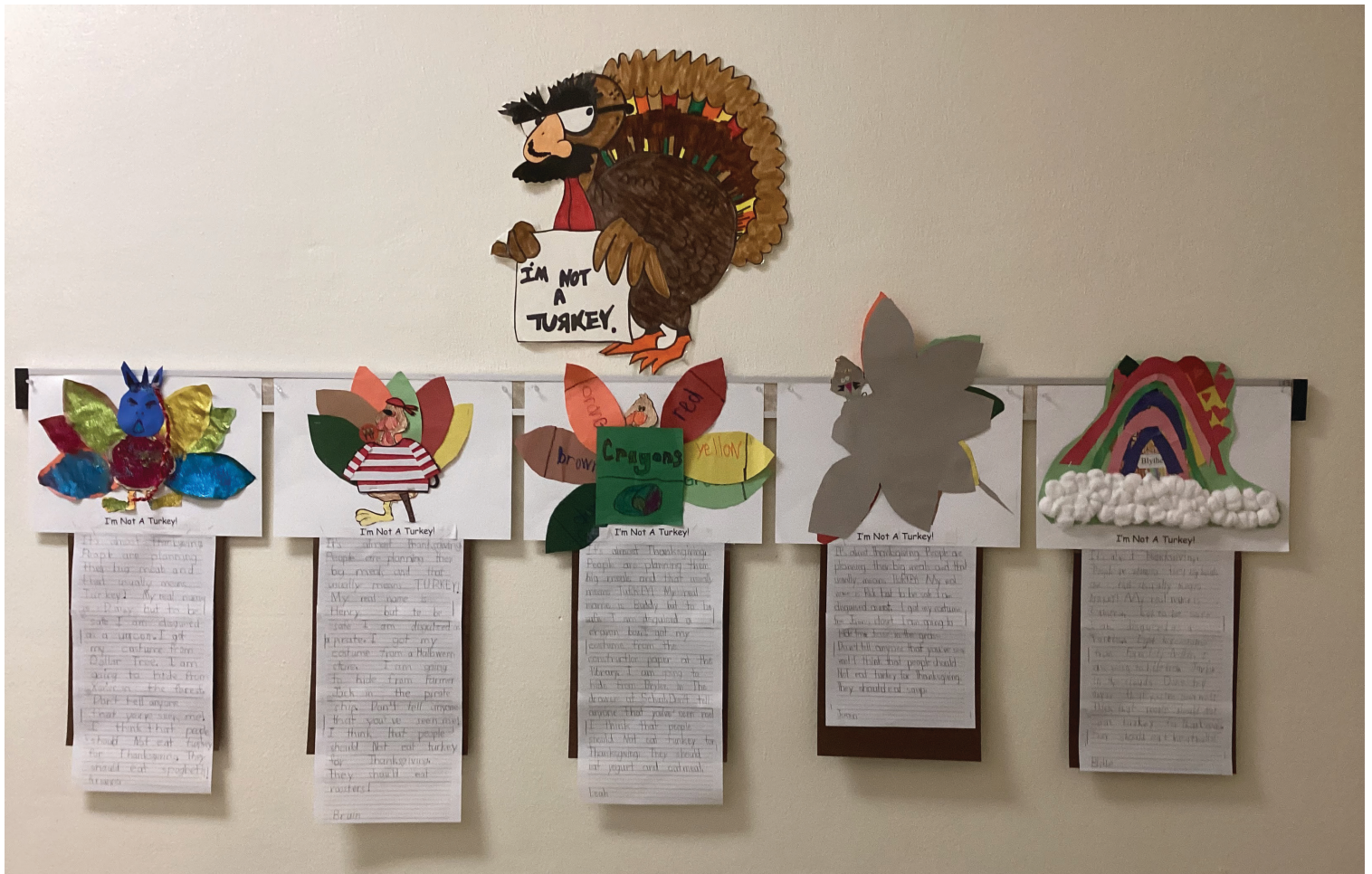
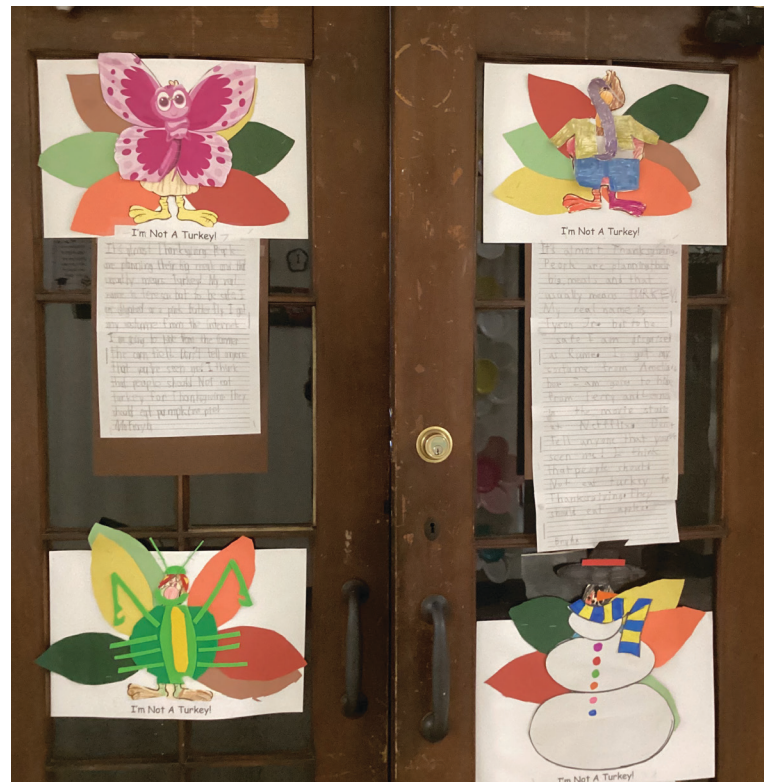
First Grade News

Mrs. Robyn Faris

The students in Mrs. Faris's class made turkeys. They went home, and their parents helped disguise them so they wouldn't be eaten during Thanksgiving.

Students then wrote a story, "I'm NOT A Turkey," to describe the disguise and explain how it would help them hide from the turkey hunters. It is a favorite activity for the first graders and fun for everyone at school to see and read.

Thank you, parents, for your help!!



Mrs. Faris

December/January Newsletter

We are so excited for Christmas! We are hoping to get a gift or two! As part of the Christmas season, we are learning about Christmas in Mexico. We are studying about the country and the people who live there. We are learning some Spanish words for days of the week, months of the year, colors, and numbers.

Las Posada traditions have been interesting to learn about. They begin 9 days before Christmas. Families and friends go house to house looking for lodging for the night. Posada means “inn or lodging”. When they find the correct home, they go in and celebrate with food, songs, and a piñata. For our Christmas celebration, we plan to break a piñata and collect all the goodies!

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas season with your friends and family!! Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays! ¡Feliz Navidad!



Johnson County Central FFA

by Briana Robeson

December/January



A successful first semester is winding down for the FFA chapter. From teams qualifying for state at district livestock and land judging competitions to students bringing home hardware from the National FFA Convention, FFA continues to prove to be one of the most consistently successful groups at JCC.

Highlights

- **District Land Judging:** In September, students competed at the district land judging event just outside of Beatrice and ended up sending a team of four to the state competition in Wahoo. Stefani Peters, Levi Othmer, Wesley Schmid, and Kaiden Dorn qualified for state and placed 15th out of 34 teams there.
- **District Livestock Judging:** In October, Hadley Hartman, Ashton Huskey, Wesley Schmid, and Sophia Schmid qualified for the state livestock judging contest. They will compete in March at the State FFA Convention.
- **National Convention:** Recently, nine members traveled to Indianapolis, IN, for the 98th National FFA Convention and Expo. While there, four agriscience teams received a national medal for their Agriscience Fair project. Reese Badertscher and Sophia Schmid placed 11th in the nation for their project in Environment and Natural Resources, Briana Robeson and Riley Wellensiek placed 8th in Environment and Natural Resources, Catherine Wendt and Ashley Beethe placed 6th in Food Products and Processing, and Molly Weber and Saige Rother placed 3rd for their project in Power/Structural/Technical Systems. Wyatt Ludeman earned his American Degree, which is the highest honor an FFA member can achieve.



Upcoming Dates

- **Monday, December 15th:** LDE's @ Weeping Water 7:00 A.M.
- **Wednesday, December 17th:** State Chorus Applications Due
- **Wednesday, January 21st:** State Talent Applications Due
- **Wednesday, January 21st:** State Degree/Proficiency Due
- **Wednesday, January 28th:** State Degree/Proficiency Interviews @ Johnson Brock High School



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National Convention:

Riley Wellensiek, Catherine Wendt, Saige Rother, Sophia Schmid, Reese Baderstcher, Molly Weber, Ashley Beethe, and Briana Robeson with their National medals.



Shatto Dairy:

Reese Baderstcher, Briana Robeson, Catherine Wendt, and Levi Othmer visited and toured Shatto Dairy on their trip to Nationals.



State Land Judging:

Stefani Peters, Levi Othmer, Wesley Schmid, and Kaiden Dorn at the State Land Judging Competition.



District Livestock Judging:

Wesley Schmid, Sophia Schmid, Hadley Hartman, and Ashton Huskey



Mr. Bartels brings interactive simulators into the classroom to give more hands-on learning for his students.

All achievements through FFA trace back to the classroom. Countless hours of work are put in for projects from our dedicated advisors. In the classroom, Mr. Bartels' Animal Science class recently had a shipment of simulators that he purchased with Perkins Funding. Among these were a bovine injection simulator, a bovine artificial insemination simulator, and several suture kits. A swine artificial insemination simulator is on its way. These simulators will be used to help students learn the basics of artificial insemination, medicine injections, and suturing. These will also aid students in preparing for the vet science CDE in February. Thanks to Mr. Bartels, students will now be better prepared for veterinary competitions and careers in agriculture.



Adree Case giving a subcutaneous injection.



Briana Robeson trying out the new suture kits.



Riley Wellensiek practicing her artificial insemination skills.



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Johnson County Central Schools 5-Year Visitation is a Success

District School Improvement Goal

"Improving Student Learning Through Growth Mindset"

- Whole-staff book study centered on developing a growth mindset
- Professional development sessions for all staff focused on fostering a growth mindset culture.
- Student lessons across all grade levels designed to promote and strengthen a growth mindset.

Goal 1: Johnson County Central Schools will provide comprehensive educational opportunities birth through 21 to all students addressing academic, emotional and social needs of students.

Strategies and/or Observations from the District

Action Plan:

- Collaboration with Early Development Network to provide early intervention services for birth to age three.
- School-wide Tier 1 Social Emotional Curriculum.
- Thunderbird Way aligned to district expectations PreK-12.
- Expanded ACT prep and test administering offerings.
- Expanded middle school class offerings.
- Expanded use of BIST to include middle and high school.
- Access to college and career opportunities (JAG & WBL).

Goal 2: Johnson County Central Schools will support student growth in literacy, increased reading comprehension, and academic vocabulary.

Strategies and/or Observations from the District
Action Plan:

- Adopted Wonders K-6 during 2020-2021.
- Beginning the ELA adoption process with a K-12 focus.
- Working ELA curriculum alignment
- Monday professional development focused on collaboration.

Goal 3: Enhance School Culture and Student Participation

Strategies and/or Observations from the District Action Plan:

- Expanded student organizations.
- Addition of more Unified Sports.
- Cross building student interactions.
- Celebrate and recognize student participation in activities.

Goal 4: Improve Facilities to Support Student Academic and Extracurricular Success.

Strategies and/or Observations
from the District Action Plan:

- Outdoor video board, new gym floor, middle school weight room, high school window wraps.
- Continued facility planning.
- Facility updates as needed.



Goal 5: Improved Parent and Community Communication and Involvement.

Strategies and/or Observations
from the District Action Plan:

- Remind Messaging System.
- PK-5 Weekly Bulletin
- Monthly mailed and digital newsletter.
- Documents provided in home language.
- Translation services.
- Updated school website and social media.
- Streaming services via STRIV



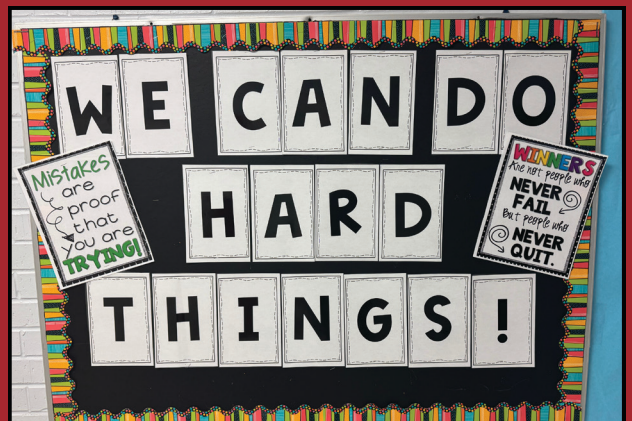
CELEBRATIONS!

VISITATION TEAM OBSERVATIONS

- Students Participating in Group Activities
- Students Appear to be Excited to be at School
- Respectful and Safe Environments
- Positive and Inviting Learning Environment
- Active Supervision and Proximity
- Diversity

NOTABLE COMMENDATIONS

- Excellent Communication.
- Pride in diverse population and inclusive environment.
- Overwhelming positive feelings about the 4-day week.
- Multiple opportunities for student involvement.
- Growth mindset is evident throughout.
- Supportive administrators, teachers and staff.
- Feels like a "family."
- Challenges with facilities and desire for one location.
- Clear and community inclusive Vision Statement.
- A strong sense of pride and positive school culture unites students, staff, and the community.
- Confidence, excitement, and anticipation for the direction the district is moving with the development and direction of the leadership team.



Greetings Thunderbird Family

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and is looking forward to Christmas! Let's put a bow on the fall season.

Here are a few sport specific highlights from the fall season.

In volleyball, the team finished with a 31-1 record with only JCC's second state tournament berth in its young history. Although the tournament didn't quite go like we wanted, we should still be very proud of our girls and coaches. The team also captured another ECNC title and MUDECAS championship.

Here are some individual achievements from the year (so far):

Ashley Beethe - OWH Class C2 State All-Tournament Team, LJS Class C2 State All-Tournament Team, KMA Nebraska Player of the Year, KMA Land All-Nebraska First Team, MUDECAS A Division All-Tournament First Team, NebPreps Class C2 Hitter of the Year, NebPreps Class C2 Player of the Year Finalist, ECNC First Team All-Conference

Harley Lubben - KMA Land All-Nebraska Second Team, MUDECAS A Division All-Tournament First Team, ECNC First Team All-Conference

Molly Weber - KMA Land All-Nebraska Honorable Mention, ECNC Third Team All-Conference

Riley Wellensiek - KMA Land All-Nebraska Third Team, MUDECAS A Division All-Tournament Honorable Mention, NebPreps Class C2 Setter of the Year, ECNC First Team All-Conference

Sophia Schmid - KMA Land All-Nebraska Honorable Mention, ECNC Third Team All-Conference

In cross country, the boys placed 3rd at ECNC and won the Weeping Water, Fremont Bergan, and Falls City Invites.

Here are some individual achievements for the year:

Trevin Huskey - ECNC All-Conference (2nd Place Medalist ECNC), District Runner-up, State Qualifier, 7th Place State Medalist, NCA All-State Class C Cross Country Team, All-KMAland Cross Country Team

Ashton Huskey - ECNC 10th Place

Juan Aguilar - ECNC 14th Place

Madison VanLaningham - ECNC 10th Place

Continued on next page...



In football, the team finished with a solid 6-2 record. Up to this point, the all district (D1-1) teams have been announced.

First Team Offense - **Wesley Swanson, Jack Waring**

First Team Defense - **AJ Rautenbach**

Second Team Defense - **Lee Xayaphonesongkham**

Honorable Mention - **Wyatt Case, Braiden Nichols**

Unified Bowling is still underway and districts are December 3rd but the team won our own invite and the squad finished as the ECNC Runner Up!

Some important winter dates:

- **First varsity basketball game:** December 5th
- **First wrestling competition:** December 4th
- **No School - NSAA Moratorium:** December 24 - December 28

Also as you head out to watch your fellow Thunderbirds play basketball this winter please remember to be respectful to the referees!

Here is my annual “know your rules” handout! Please read before attending basketball games this year!

Have a safe holiday season!

Garrett Collin



Most Misunderstood Basketball Rules

******The front, top, sides, and bottom of the backboard are all in play. The ball cannot pass over a rectangular backboard from either direction. The back of a backboard is out of bounds as well as the supporting structures

******The traveling rule is one of the most misunderstood rules in basketball. To start a dribble, the ball must be released before the pivot foot is lifted. On a pass or a shot, the pivot foot may be lifted, but may not return to the floor before the ball is released. A player may slide on the floor while trying to secure a loose ball until that player's momentum stops. At that point that player cannot attempt to get up or rollover. A player securing a ball while on the floor cannot attempt to stand up unless that player starts a dribble. A player in this situation may also pass, shoot, or call a timeout. If the player is flat on his or her back, that player may sit up without violating.

******The hand is considered part of the ball when the hand is in contact with the ball. This includes holding, dribbling, passing, or even during a shot attempt. Striking a ball handler or a shooter on that player's hand that is incidental to an attempt to play the ball is not a foul, no matter how loud it sounds or how much it hurts.

******Reaching in is not a foul. The term is nowhere to be found in any rulebook. There must be contact to have a foul. The mere act of reaching in, by itself, is nothing. If contact does occur, it's either a holding foul or illegal use of hands foul. When a player, in order to stop the clock, does not make a legitimate play for the ball, holds, pushes or grabs away from the ball, or uses undue roughness, the foul is an intentional foul.

******Over the back is not a foul. The term is nowhere to be found in any rulebook. There must be contact to have a foul. A taller player may often be able to get a rebound over a shorter player, even if the shorter player has good rebounding position. If the shorter player is displaced, then a pushing foul must be called. A rebounding player, with an inside position, while boxing out, is not allowed to push back or displace an opponent, which is a pushing foul.

******A defensive player does not have to remain stationary to take a charge. A defender may turn away or duck to absorb contact, provided he or she has already established legal guarding position, which is both feet on the playing court and facing the opponent. The defender can always move backwards or sideways to maintain a legal guarding position and may even have one or both feet off the playing court when contact occurs. That player may legally rise vertically. If the defender is moving forward, then the contact is caused by the defender, which is a blocking foul.

******The intent of the three-second rule is to not allow an offensive player to gain an advantage. Referees will not call this violation if the player is not gaining an advantage. There is no three-second count between the release of a shot and the control of a rebound, at which time a new count starts. There is no three-second count during a throw in. There is no three-second count while the ball is in the backcourt. Allowance shall be made for a player who, having been in the restricted area for less than three seconds, dribbles in or moves immediately to try for goal

******Officials do not make calls that decide the outcome of a game. Players commit fouls and violations; officials view those infractions, judge the action, and then apply the rules of the game to what they had viewed. The rules then determine the penalty. Officials are on the court to be the only unbiased arbiters of the game. Officials are not concerned with who wins or loses, but only fairness and safety. Everyone else in that gym cares about winning, and therefore cannot look at the game objectively.

Greetings From the Elementary!

by Principal Beckie Robeson

Our first semester has flown by quickly. I have enjoyed getting to know the students and families in our PK-3 building as well as the entire JCC district. As we continue through the school year together, I want to thank you for your ongoing support. Our school is a place where children learn, grow, and discover their strengths—and that is only possible because of the strong partnership we share with you.

Thank you for helping your children arrive ready to learn each day, for attending events, and for staying connected with staff and teachers. Your encouragement at home and involvement at school make a tremendous difference. Whether you're volunteering, cheering from the sidelines, or simply asking your child about their day, your support helps us create a positive and caring learning environment.

I am truly grateful for the trust you place in us and for the teamwork that makes our school community so special. Together, we're building a foundation that helps every student shine!



Classroom Highlights

- **Preschool:** The preschool will investigate hibernation, prepare for a winter holiday program and a family night event, and celebrate with the Polar Express during December. January will bring arctic animals, problem-solving skills, and what a Super Friend means.
- **Resource:** We have a practicum student, Jayden Tracy, from Peru State College. She has been working in the Horizons Room and Resource Room. We are so happy to have an extra person to read to students and help them with their work.
- **Kindergarten:** In November, the kindergarteners participated in a Thanksgiving program, singing songs for families to celebrate their gratitude. They also enjoyed a Friendsgiving feast together. For December, the classes plan to have a pajama "Polar Express" experience and create gingerbread houses from recycled milk cartons, frosting, and candy decorations. Students are exploring creativity and building skills, all while having some holiday fun!
- **First Grade:** First-grade students have begun reading Junie B. Jones books during literature time. We disguised turkeys and are getting ready to learn about Christmas in Mexico!
- **Second-Grade:** The second-grade students have been studying poetry in reading, practicing addition with regrouping, and learning about the oceans and continents.
- **Third Grade:** In the third-grade classrooms, we are enjoying Christmas around the world, learning how Christmas traditions differ from place to place. We are continuing to strengthen our cursive as we finish up learning how to write each letter.

Important Dates

- **Monday, December 1:** Teacher In-Service, no school for students
- **Monday, December 8:** No School
- **Wednesday, December 10:** NDOT Name a Snowplow presentation 1:30 p.m.
- **Monday, December 15:** K-3 Winter Music Concert 7:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, December 17:** Preschool Holiday Program 6:30 p.m.
- **Friday, December 19:**
 - Teacher In-Service, no school for students
 - End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester
- **December 22 - January 5:** Winter break - No School
- **Tuesday, January 6:** School Resumes
- **Monday, January 12:** No School
- **Monday, January 19:** Teacher In-Service, no school for students
- **Monday, January 26:** No School

Contact Info:

Please feel free to contact me at anytime during the school year
email: beckie.robesson@jcccentral.org phone: 402-335-7839

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Something to Think About...

Dec./Jan. 25-26

A Season of Growth and Gratitude

As the winter season arrives, the school community reflects on the many accomplishments of the first half of the year. Students have shown tremendous academic and social growth, and the dedication of teachers, staff, and families continues to make a lasting impact. The colder months bring opportunities to celebrate learning, kindness, and community spirit.

Health and Safety Reminders

- Encourage proper handwashing and covering coughs to prevent seasonal illnesses.
- Ensure students come to school with warm coats, hats, and gloves for outdoor recess.
- Notify the school if a student will be absent due to illness.

Celebrating Kindness

This winter, our school will continue to recognize and celebrate kindness shown towards others. Students are praised for acts of compassion, respect, and helpfulness. Families are encouraged to discuss ways to show kindness at home and in the community.

Looking Ahead

The new year will bring exciting learning opportunities, including the reading celebrations, reading competitions, and spring field trips. A continued partnership between home and school ensures that every student thrives.

Warm Wishes

I want to take this opportunity to wish all families a joyful holiday season filled with peace, rest, and togetherness. Thank you for supporting the school's goal to nurture curiosity, confidence, and care in every child.



Contact Info:

Please feel free to contact me at anytime during the school year
email: beckie.roberson@jccentral.org phone: 402-335-7839

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NOTES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Mrs. Olivia Reuter

December 15th- Education Quest Here to Help with FAFSA Completion

On Monday, December 15th, from 6:30 PM until 8:00 PM, Treve Florum from Education Quest in Lincoln will be here at JCC High School in the computer lab to help families with the 2026/2027 FAFSA form, the form that current seniors in high school will fill out in order to see what types and amounts of financial aid they are eligible to receive for their first year at a college or university (next school year).

The FAFSA (the free application for federal student aid) is an online form that In order to fill out the FAFSA, the student, and at least one parent needs a studentaid.gov account. It is highly recommended that both the student and parent has a studentaid.gov account and knows how to log into it before they come to this event. When you create the account make sure that both the student and parent provides their legal name as it is shown on your social security card. Also, double and triple check to make sure that you enter in your social security numbers correctly. To create a studentaid.gov account, go to <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account>

Apply Now- Susan Buffett Scholarship

Applications for Buffett Foundation scholarships are now open until February 1st, 2026 at 5:00 PM. There are many sections of this application to complete, so students who plan to apply need to start now. The income limit for applying to this scholarship is much higher than many other financial need scholarships, so more people are eligible than maybe think they are. In order to apply and submit, seniors must have their FAFSA complete and attach a 7 semester transcript (the transcript available after their first semester of their senior year is complete) The Susan T. Buffett Foundation (STBF) has offered scholarships to college students in Nebraska for over 50 years. Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to first-time freshman entering college who live in Nebraska, graduate from a Nebraska high school with plans to attend a Nebraska public college, and demonstrate financial need. To learn more about the scholarship and to apply, go to <https://buffettscholarships.org/>

Nebraska's Universal FAFSA Requirement- All Seniors in the Class of 2026 Must Fill Out the FAFSA or Turn in a Signed Waiver Form

Nebraska law now requires all public high school students to complete and submit a FAFSA (or actively opt-out) as a graduation requirement. FAFSA became a graduation requirement with the passage of revised statute 79-729 in 2023.

The Nebraska legislature determined that the FAFSA is an excellent opportunity to learn of financial aid they may receive, to encourage postsecondary education, and to make more informed college-going decisions. There are many resources to complete the FAFSA. If students need help, they can definitely ask Mrs. Reuter. Filling out the FAFSA does not mean that students must make the ultimate decision of going to college. The FAFSA just allows them to see what financial resources are available to them if they decide to go to college.

If students and their parents decide that filling out the FAFSA is not right for them, for any reason, there is a waiver form available in both English and Spanish. Students who do not fill out the FAFSA must complete a waiver form with their parents and turn it into Mrs. Reuter by May 1st. The waiver forms are available in Mrs. Reuter's office.

High School Students and Parents- EducationQuest is an Important Resource

EducationQuest is an excellent resource for all Nebraska high school students and their parents and families. Whether it's exploring colleges and future options, understanding how to plan for college or figuring out how to pay for college, EducationQuest has all of the information you could ever need and people available at their offices to answer any questions you may have. They are especially helpful when it comes to applying for financial aid and filling out the FAFSA. The FAFSA (free application for federal financial aid) should be filled out by every student planning to attend college whether they will qualify for federal aid or not. The reason is because it's a tool that most colleges and universities use to award institutional aid as well. In talking with a representative in the financial aid office at UNL, there are several scholarships that go unawarded because students they could award them to do not have a FAFSA on file. Filling out the FAFSA can be daunting and confusing as it changes every single year. Visit EducationQuest's website or call their Lincoln office at 402-475-5222 for help. They always have someone willing to help!

Johnson County Central High School Class of 2026

Introducing the Class of 2026... Each month, I will feature some of our seniors at JCC High School. This month, meet Marisol, Harley, Madison, Trevin, and Zeke.



Marisol Mandl
JCC Class of 2026

Marisol Mandl is the daughter of Ken and Angela Mandl of Tecumseh. She has no siblings but her family has hosted five exchange students in the past- Simon, Cristina, Gina, Zuzana, and Celia.

Her favorite high school class is journalism because she loves taking pictures and creating the yearbook. Her most challenging class was chemistry. During her high school years, Marisol has been involved in golf, band, cheer, choir, basketball as a student manager, FBLA, quiz bowl, and yearbook. Her favorite school lunch is the popcorn chicken bowl.

After high school, she plans to attend either the University of South Dakota or Nebraska Wesleyan University where she plans to major in business, most likely in marketing or finance. Her future career plans will likely involve her working at a bank because she is good with money.

Outside of school, she likes to golf and go out with her friends. Her favorite music artist is Asap Rocky and her favorite TV show is Gossip Girl. In ten years, Marisol plans to be out of Tecumseh, probably living in Lincoln.

Harley Lubben is the daughter of Dave and Emily Lubben of Burr. She has one brother, Trey, who is 16.

Harley's school activities have been volleyball, basketball, track and field, FFA, and choir. Her favorite school lunch is the popcorn chicken bowl. Her favorite high school classes have been her math classes because she is good with numbers. When asked about her least favorite class, Harley says, "It is history because we are taught to leave the past behind us, but they want us to learn what happened back then."

Outside of school, Harley likes to ride her horse. Harley plans to attend college after she graduates from high school. She is currently considering Northwest Missouri State and Northeast Community College. She is interested in studying animal science in college and would like to be a vet tech in the future. Harley likes all kinds of country music. In ten years, Harley says, "I will be living on a small farm with a family and kids. I will be working at a small vet clinic."



Harley Lubben
JCC Class of 2026

Johnson County Central High School Class of 2026



Madison VanLaningham
JCC Class of 2026

Madison Rose VanLaningham is the daughter of Tiffany DeJonge and Tim VanLaningham. She lives in Elk Creek. Her siblings are Tylese Basdin, Matthew Dorn, Aurora VanLaningham, Natalya Kirkendall, and Chloe Kirkendall.

Madison's favorite high school class is anatomy/physiology because it is interesting to her. Her most challenging class is business math because she has always struggled with math. Her high school activities have included cross country, track and field, speech, One Act, yearbook, and Buds. Her favorite school lunch is when tacos are served.

Outside of school, Madison likes to take pictures, read, and run. After she graduates high school, she plans to attend Peru State College. Her eventual career plans are to be a veterinarian and to also have a photography business on the side.

Her favorite music artist is Luke Bryan. Her favorite movie is Little Rascals, and her favorite author is Nicholas Sparks. In ten years, Madison sees herself married and hopefully building her own veterinary clinic.

Trevin Huskey is the son of Nick and Angie Huskey. He lives in the country near Burr and has two brothers, Hayden (21) and Ashton (15), and one sister, Hope, who is 3.

Trevin's favorite high school classes have been his shop classes because he likes to craft and configure things. When asked about his most challenging class, Trevin said, "My junior year I had Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus, it was a lot of hard math that I most of the time had to do on my own." During high school, Trevin has been involved in cross country, wrestling, track and field, FBLA, One Act, spring play, and Skills USA. His favorite school lunch is the popcorn chicken bowl.

Outside of school, Trevin enjoys spending time outdoors doing lots of things, including playing outdoor sports and driving off-road vehicles. He doesn't have a clear favorite when it comes to music or books, but he likes watching CBOYSTV, and listening to their podcast called Life Wide Open.

After high school, he plans to attend Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs, IA to get his airframe maintenance and technology certificate and his AMP licenses. After college, he will either go to the Air Force or work at Duncan Aviation as an airframe technician.

In ten years, Trevin says, "I will probably stay close to Southeast Nebraska because of my job at Duncan Aviation, or I will be wherever the Air Force needs me. I will likely live in the country on either a farm or an acreage. I will hopefully be married and have kids."



Trevin Huskey
JCC Class of 2026

Johnson County Central High School Class of 2026



Ezekiel (Zeke) Burki
JCC Class of 2026

Ezekiel (Zeke) William Burki is the son of Lukas and Amanda Burki of rural Tecumseh. He has three siblings, Gabriel (18), Abigail (15), and Josephine (11).

Zeke's favorite high school class has been academic decathlon because it is fun and easy. When asked about his most difficult class, Zeke said, "That is definitely English 1010- dual credit college composition because we have five essays due before December 17th. During his high school years, Zeke has been involved in academic decathlon, Skills USA (two time national competition qualifier), wrestling, cheerleading, One Act, spring play, art club, track and field, and quiz bowl. Zeke's favorite school lunch is chicken nuggets.

Outside of school, Zeke likes to work so he can earn money. When asked about his favorite music, TV shows, and movies, Zeke responded with, "Gravity Falls, Happy Gilmore 2, and Bbno\$." After he graduates from high school, Zeke plans to attend college. He is considering both Doane and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, but he is not yet sure where he will go for sure. He is interested in majoring in business.

When asked about his future career interests, he said, "I will probably have a career in business or marketing. I have been told that I am persuasive and have been recommended to those types of careers by others." In ten years, Zeke sees himself working in a career that he enjoys and living in an apartment or rental home, trying to afford a home of his own.

Presten James Myers is the son of Brandon and Kasey Myers of Talmage. He has four siblings, Ariana (15), Bentley (14), Ryder (8), and Lainey (2 months).

When asked about his favorite high school class, Presten said, "Welding because that class grabbed my attention the most with it being a hands-on class. I learned a skill that I will use in my future." His most challenging high school classes have been his math classes because, "I am not good at math and I don't know when I will use most of what we learn in those classes." In high school, Presten has been involved in Buds and unified bowling. His favorite school lunch is when hamburgers and baked beans are served.


Outside of school, Presten likes to work on cars and hang out with his family. His favorite music is rap. His favorite tv show is My Name is Earl and his favorite movie is How To Train Your Dragon. His favorite book is The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate. After high school, Presten hopes to attend Southeast Community College in Milford to study automotive technology, powersports technology, and business. His career goal is to open his own automotive, motorcycle, and ATV repair shop.

In ten years, Presten says, "I hope to be doing well with my own repair shop in the Talmage area and making lots of money. I hope to be living in a farmhouse that I own out in the country near Talmage. I will probably be married with a kid or two."



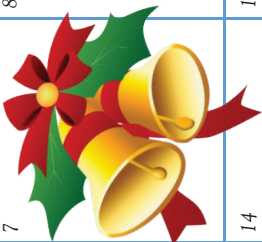
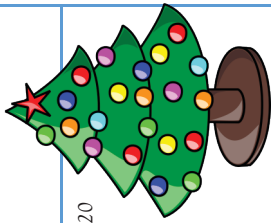

Presten Myers
JCC Class of 2026

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 QR Code for JCC Event Calendar on Google! 	NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service	2 JH Boys Basketball @ Syracuse 4:30 PM HS (9th-12th Grades) Winter Music Concert @ Elem Auditorium - 7 PM	3 District One-Act 6:30 AM	4 Varsity Boys Wrestling Dual @ Palmyra 3:30 PM JH Boys Basketball vs Elmwood-Murdock @ MS Gym Cook 4:30 PM	5 JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Mead - 4:30 PM	6 JH Boys Basketball Home Tournament @ MS Gym Cook - 9 AM Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Conestoga - 9 AM
7	8 NO SCHOOL JH Girls Wrestling @ ECNC Meet @ Weeping Water - 4 PM C Team Girls/Boys Basketball @ Louisville - 6 PM	9 JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Southern - 4:30 PM	10 Middle School Skills USA @ Career Skills - 7 AM JCC School Board Meeting - 6 PM @ HS Computer Lab (Rm 204)	11 JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Syracuse - 4:30 PM	12 Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Bellevue West 3:30 PM Cook Site (4th-8th Grades) Christmas Music Concert 7 PM - MS Gym Cook	13 JH Boys Basketball Tournament @ Palmyra 8 AM Varsity Girls/Boys Wrestling @ North Bend Invite 9:30 AM
14 Cook Community Christmas Party @ Cook Site Gym	15 District Leadership FFA @ Weeping Water JH Boys Basketball vs Auburn @ MS Gym Cook 4:30 PM C Team Girls/Boys Basketball @ Freeman - 6 PM K-3 Winter Music Concert @ Elem Auditorium - 7 PM	16 JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball vs Palmyra - 4:30 PM JH Boys Basketball @ Weeping Water - 5 PM	17 Preschool Holiday Program @ Elem Auditorium - 6:30 PM	18 Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Fairbury - 2 PM JH Boys Basketball vs Sterling @ MS Gym Cook 4:30 PM JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Louisville - 4:30 PM	19 NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service Varsity Girls/Boys Wrestling Home Invite @ MS Gym Cook 9:30 AM	20
21	22 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	23 NO SCHOOL Winter Break JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Freeman - 4:30 PM	24 NO SCHOOL Winter Break NSAA Winter Moratorium (ALL GYMS CLOSED)	25 NO SCHOOL Winter Break NSAA Winter Moratorium (ALL GYMS CLOSED)	26 NO SCHOOL Winter Break NSAA Winter Moratorium (ALL GYMS CLOSED)	27 NO SCHOOL Winter Break NSAA Winter Moratorium (ALL GYMS CLOSED)
28 NO SCHOOL Winter Break NSAA Winter Moratorium (ALL GYMS CLOSED)	29 NO SCHOOL Winter Break Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Holiday Tournament @ Weeping Water - TBD	30 NO SCHOOL Winter Break Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Holiday Tournament @ Weeping Water - TBD	31 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	ALL ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE		

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>QR Code for JCC Event Calendar on Google!</p> 				<p>1</p> <p>NO SCHOOL Winter Break</p>	<p>2</p> <p>NO SCHOOL Winter Break</p> <p>Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Winnebago - 9 AM</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Shelby-Rising City 9:30 AM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls Basketball vs Johnson-Brock - 11 AM & 12:30 PM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Boys Basketball vs Ashland-Greenwood - 2:30 PM & 4:00 PM</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service</p> <p>C Team Girls/Boys Basketball vs Syracuse - 6 PM</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling Home Quad @ MS Gym Cook 5 PM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls Basketball @ Auburn - 5:30 PM</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball vs Wilber-Clatonia - 4:30 PM</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Beatrice - 3 PM</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Wilber-Clatonia - 3 PM</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>NO SCHOOL</p> <p>Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ MUDECAS Tournament (Beatrice)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ MUDECAS Tournament (Beatrice)</p> <p>Varsity Girls/Boys Wrestling Home Dual - 5 PM</p>	<p>14</p> <p>JCC School Board Meeting - 6 PM @ HS Computer Lab (Rm 204)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ MUDECAS Tournament (Beatrice)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Varsity Girls Basketball @ MUDECAS Tournament (Beatrice)</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Superior - 2 PM</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Varsity Boys Basketball @ MUDECAS Tournament (Beatrice)</p>
<p>18</p> <p>Choir Trip @ Lied Center (Lincoln) 1:30 PM</p>	<p>19</p> <p>NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service</p> <p>C Team Girls/Boys Basketball vs Wilber-Clatonia - 6 PM</p>	<p>20</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball vs Weeping Water - 4:30 PM</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling Dual @ Lincoln Christian - 7 PM</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball vs Tri County - 4:30 PM</p> <p>Varsity Girls/Boys Wrestling Dual @ Falls City - 5 PM</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Louisville - 10 AM</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Johnson County Spelling Bee @ Cook Site - 8:30 AM</p> <p>Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Weeping Water - 9:30 AM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball vs Falls City - 1 PM</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>NO SCHOOL</p> <p>JH Girls Basketball @ Freeman - 4 PM</p> <p>C Team Girls/Boys Basketball @ Southern - 6 PM</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Varsity Girls Wrestling @ ECNC Invite @ Palmyra - 4 PM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ HTRS - 4:30 PM</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>JH Girls Basketball vs Elmwood-Murdock @ MS Gym Cook - 4:30 PM</p> <p>JV/Varsity Girls/Boys Basketball @ Fairbury - 4:30 PM</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Central CC Hastings College Visit 6:45 AM</p> <p>Varsity Boys Wrestling @ Freeman - 3 PM</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Singing Youth of Nebraska</p> <p>JH Girls Basketball Home Tournament @ MS Gym Cook - 9 AM</p> <p>Varsity Girls Wrestling @ Cedar Bluffs - 9 AM</p> <p>MUDECAS Speech @ HTRS - 10 AM</p>

ALL ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

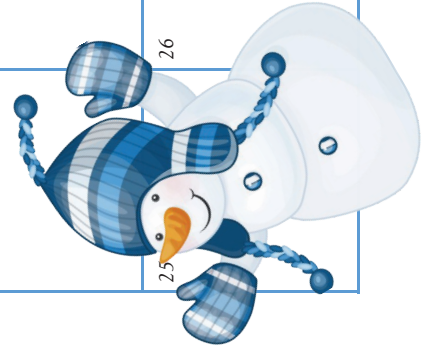
December 2025 Johnson County Central Lunch Menu

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 NO SCHOOL TEACHER IN-SERVICE	2 Chicken Fajita Hot Veggie Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	3 Chicken Patty/WG Bun Hot Veggie Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	4 Cheesburger/WG Bun Potato Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	5 Chicken Quesadilla Refried Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	6
7 	8 NO SCHOOL	9 Chicken Strips Baked Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	10 Chili Cinnamon Roll Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	11 Turkey/Cheese Wrap Potato Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	12 Fiestada Hot Veggie Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	13
14	15 Thai Meatballs Fried Rice Breadsticks Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	16 Chef's Choice Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	17 Sloppy Joe/WG Bun Potato Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	18 Hotdog/WG Bun Baked Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	19 NO SCHOOL TEACHER INSERVICE JCC Wrestling Invite	20 
21	22 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	23 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	24 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	25 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	26 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	27
28	29 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	30 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	31 NO SCHOOL Winter Break	Menu Is Subject to Change Without Notice “This Institution Is An Equal Opportunity Provider”		
						

January 2026

Johnson County Central Lunch Menu

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Menu Is Subject to Change Without Notice		"This Institution Is An Equal Opportunity Provider"		1	2	3
4	5			8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



SAVE THE DATE

**Johnson County Central Preschool
2026-27 Enrollment Opens
February 1, 2026**



**An online application can be completed beginning
February 1, 2026**

www.jccentral.org

**If you have any questions or would like to schedule a
classroom visit, please call the elementary office: 402-
335-3320**



All preschool children, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or the social, linguistic, or economic diversity of the children's families are eligible to be served in our preschool program.

News from the Special Education and Student Services Director

Dr. Laura Rademacher

Upcoming Dates

March 26th - SUBMIT and SHINE
Event at JCC

If you have concerns about your student, please reach out to their teacher(s), principal or Dr. Rad to discuss strategies that may be helpful.



FUN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Count marshmallows for math practice,
- Cut paper snowflakes to build fine motor skills,
- Create a winter story or game to encourage language development,
- Make hot cocoa together while discussing measurement and sequencing.



Holiday Social Battery

As the holiday season approaches, it's important to remember that everyone walks into the room with different battery levels. Many people thrive with all the hustle and bustle of the season and are excited to spend time with family and friends. While others have social batteries that drain faster when in a room full of people. Please, have grace for who may need moments to themselves to recharge their batteries. Some strategies to help combat this be sure to offer calming activities like "snowflake breathing," gentle stretching exercises, and mindfulness games, along with routines for winter break to help students maintain a sense of stability and emotional balance during seasonal changes.

Caregivers strategies:

- Casually spend time sharing the successes and challenges of caring for a loved one with a disability
- Discuss self-care strategies
- Connect with other caregivers who understand your experiences

JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PO Box 338
Tecumseh, NE 68450

PO Box 225
Cook, NE 68329

Phone: 402-335-3320 Superintendent @ Tecumseh
402-335-3328 Principal @ Tecumseh
402-864-2024 Elementary Office @ Cook
402-864-4171 Principal @ Cook
402-864-4181 MS Office @ Cook

Website: www.jccentral.org

This newsletter is produced monthly to inform parents, district patrons and others about school events, classroom events, and student achievements in the classroom and extra curricular activities. This information is submitted by faculty and staff members. Information may be submitted to offices at Tecumseh and Cook.

The school reserves the right to edit information in the interest of space and content.

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Non-Discrimination

It shall be the policy of Johnson County Central Public Schools to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for discrimination concerns. Inquiries concerning any of the above, or Title IX and Rehabilitation Act Regulations (504) should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools, 358 N 6th Street, Tecumseh, NE 68329; (402)335-3320.

Child Find

Children that are birth to 5 years old who are experiencing problems with speech language, cognitive, emotional and/or physical development or have a disability can receive services through Early Childhood Education Services. If interested or in need of more information please contact Rebecca Kling, Special Education Coordinator or Jon Rother, Superintendent at 402-335-3320.