JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THUNDERBIRD NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2026

The Way We Were

Volume 20
Issue 4

Inside This Issue

1 - Superintendent Update
5- High School News
7- Middle School News
9- Elementary News
12- Student Health News
13- Notes from the High Scool Counselor
17- Student Services & Special Education News
19- Vocal Music Announcements
20- Activities Calendar
21- Lunch Menu

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SUPERINTENDENT MONTHLY UPDATE
BY JON H. ROTHER

"Memories, light the corners of my mind
Misty watercolor memories of the way we were."
~ Barbara Streisand

Doing the research, crunching the numbers, reading through old newsletters and board minutes, listening to stories and reflecting on my own experiences, I've learned a lot about our district and towns. And, there's still more to learn. A lot more. Throughout the years,one thing has remained consistent: change.

I often hear people with fond memories, pining for a time that once was. Some call them "the good old days". Maybe they were, or maybe we were just younger versions of ourselves. Less bitter and more carefree. Spending less time reading the newspaper or devouring 24-hour news stations or social media and more time with each other, on our feet and moving around in the real world.

I moved to Tecumseh in 1983; fighting and scratching all the way. I wanted to stay in Sidney, NE. It was familiar. In the fall of 1983, I entered 2nd grade in what is now JCC's Tecumseh Site Elementary. Mrs. Jane Davis was my teacher. Return of the Jedi was released earlier in the spring, so I had as much Star Wars branded school gear as my backpack could carry. Those are some good memories for me indeed.

It's funny, being a principal myself, I don't think I even knew there was a principal at Sidney's South Elementary or at Tecumseh Public. If there was, I don't remember meeting the person! Maybe, back then, the teachers just handled more stuff on their own. I remember once having to stay in during recess in the first grade. Mrs. Bennett was the teacher. We were ordered to report to the classroom following lunch and sit quietly at our desks. When I arrived, there was no teacher. Just me and a couple other kids staring quietly at the walls and each other. The times I "got in trouble" at school, or had a tussle with a classmate, I didn't dare tell my parents. It would have been worse at home! Things have changed.

I often joke that I've been in the JCC's Tecumseh Site Elementary since the early 80's. I was here from 1983 through 1987 as Tecumseh Elementary was a kindergarten through 6th grade building. There was no air conditioning; just box fans in the windows. There were no preschool classrooms either.

Superintendent's Article continued on Page 2

Superintendent's Article continued from Page 1

Special education for elementary students was in the high school. There was a class called "Chapter 1" that was for Reading and Math help. The basement of the elementary was the locker rooms for junior high sports. The big space in the basement was at one time a music room, another time a library and then also an art room. Things have really changed since then.

During my junior high and high school years, I was in and out of the old 1931 elementary building for sports and activities. Then, it was off to college. But, my dad's office was still there. He was the superintendent for Tecumseh Public Schools from 1983 to 1999. I'd stop in from time to time to see him.

In the spring of 2000, with my wife teaching at Norris, me teaching driver education and picking up a few assistant coaching positions at Tecumseh, and our firstborn on the way in May, it was time to decide where we'd plant our family. We drove around Southeast Nebraska considering all the options. As Maggie (my wife) was teaching at Norris, the prospect of living around the Hickman/Firth countryside was a consideration.

I wanted to travel and see new places. But, we both knew we wanted our children to be familiar with their grandparents. I applied at Stuart, Nebraska and at Tecumseh Public for an elementary position. After being offered the Tecumseh fourth grade job by the elementary principal, my dad announced that he had accepted a job to be superintendent at Glenallen, Alaska! Mom, dad and my youngest sister would take off that summer for the Yukon.

And, that was it. I was teaching in the old Tecumseh Elementary building where I attended grade school, went on to get my administrator degree and am here still today.

But, things have truly changed. Whether we like it or not. Whether it be evolving code compliance for facilities, new and "improved" state legislation, increased testing, technology or updated policies, schools look a bit different today from 1983.

Today, most schools have preschool programming. When Tecumseh Public Schools started preschool, there wasn't room for the additional students. The singular class was in one of two modular buildings located between the current JCC high school and elementary. English Language Learners, a special education classroom and the superintendent/business office were also located in the modular buildings.

Public schools are now better equipped to identify and meet the needs of students with disabilities. Doing so means having the personnel and spaces to commit to their services. Each of JCC's buildings now has two classrooms for special services.

State standards were enacted in April of 2000 in Nebraska which in turn meant state testing. This would change the way we teach, test and run schools. Lobbyists for big publishers would ensure everything aligned as curriculum and testing became a multi-billion dollar industry. Now, students are tested multiple times per year starting in Kindergarten.

As a result of the testing, schools and school districts are now ranked and given labels. This came from a federal mandate that states receiving federal funding had to be able to identify their lowest performing schools so those schools could receive help. States took it a step further and made full ranking systems. This helped add to the anxiety and frustration of parents and school staff alike. Parents started wondering if their children could get a good education, earn scholarships, or be successful if the school their children attended had a lower average, or ranking, than the neighboring school.

In a seemingly unrelated series of changes, college and pro sports came to be more popular. Athletes were receiving astronomical wages and endorsement deals. Videos of Tiger Woods golfing at age five after his multiple golf titles

Superintendent's Article continued on Page 3

Superintendent's Article continued from Page 2

had parents thinking. The push began to specialize at a young age in hopes of raising the next big athlete. Club sports were born and our ambitions were monetized. Parents paid even closer attention to which schools had the "best" programs and coaches. They started to wonder, would their children get noticed by college recruiters if they weren't on a state championship team? Now, college and even some high school students are paid to play their game through NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) deals. More change.

Option enrollment took hold. It was actually enacted in 1989. In the first year of option enrollment, a total of 370 students statewide would option to another school or district. As state aid for school districts began to dwindle and rural communities saw a decline in population, school consolidations became more common. Some of the consolidations were quite contentious for the communities involved. The new makeup of some districts would leave families in one district but geographically closer to another. Option enrollment became an answer to the inconveniences of an oddly shaped school distinct. Also, after state testing and school rankings became common, option enrollment numbers would rise considerably. Currently, in the ESU4 area alone (10 public schools), there are 651 students optioning out of their home district. These things were almost unheard of in the past. But, for better or worse, things changed again.

Technology is now a major part of today's educational services. This requires not only the hardware and software, but the infrastructure and securities to support it. In turn, this requires training for both staff and students. This is all tied into the curriculum and testing as the technology is now needed to access all the curriculum and to administer the standardized tests. Middle school and high school students now have one-to-one devices provided by the school district. Not to mention most children have their own personal cell phone or device amped up with Artificial Intelligence.

The Americans With Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990. This would not only change the way schools operated, but also the physical spaces that are used for education. The physical makeup and space of a school cannot be a hindrance to students receiving their education. Schools then made physical changes to their facilities such as adding ramps, lifts and/or elevators. Also, handicap accessibility throughout the buildings to include door handles, restrooms, lunch tables, gym seating and water fountains.

Somewhere along the line, it was decided air conditioning should be added to schools. I don't know if they thought the box fans were too noisy, if a bunch of sweaty kids and teachers caused too much of an odor or if they found out students learned better in more moderate, comfortable environments. But, it happened. The challenge was how to fit these systems into facilities that were not designed to have them. For instance, the Tecumseh Site Elementary has a wood framed roof. This limits how much can be installed on the roof.

Fire code, fire safety and electrical code have all changed over those 40 years since I was in elementary school. Who would have thought that we would be locking our schools up and adding tamper-resistant glass? Or, that we'd have security cameras throughout the interior and exterior of our schools and buses? And, every middle school and high school student would get their own computer to use?! Wow! Yes, indeed, things have changed.

It has been said that change is the only constant. Although some things will remain familiar, I believe this to be true. The time has come again for more change. Our school board has recognized this. They have initiated these changes and have given us a voice in helping direct these changes.

Superintendent's Article continued on Page 4

Superintendent's Article continued from Page 3

Winter Weather Announcements

Snow is great as long as it's on the weekends!

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 ParentSquare is up-to-date. Should you have any issues with communication through ParentSquare, 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/

End of Quarter One Already?

Wow! Our first quarter is done. From the first day back in August, our students have brought energy, curiosity, and dedication to their learning.

High school students should have received their first-quarter report cards on Friday, October 23, 2026. Congratulations to all students who earned a spot on the 1st Quarter Honor Roll. Please feel free to call or email your student's teachers if you have any questions about your student's academic standing.

1st Quarter Honor Roll is an accomplishment that reflects the hard work, commitment, and perseverance that go into academic success.

Reminder: Parents/guardians can stay up to date on grades through PowerSchool. When parents/guardians show interest in their child's academic performance, it will impact their child's desire to succeed. Here are a few ideas to help your student be successful.

- Establish a consistent routine at home for homework
- Check grades regularly
- Encourage communication between your child and the teachers
- Promote organization and time managment
- Listen to their concerns
- Praise their successes, let them know how proud you are of them
- Ask specific questions about their classes or projects

Fall Season of Athletics is Coming to an End

Our fall athletic programs are wrapping up their successful seasons as I write this. Our athletic teams continued to represent JCC with pride, effort, and excellent sportsmanship, and they should be commended for their accomplishments this season. The football, volleyball, girls' golf, and cross-country teams all gave outstanding efforts and worked hard to improve throughout the season.

A special thank you to the coaches for their time, energy, leadership, and support throughout the fall season. Coaching takes countless hours of preparation, practice, travel, and encouragement, and we are grateful for our coaches' commitment to helping our students succeed.

Thank you to the parents, families, and fans who supported our teams throughout the season. Whether you attended games, traveled to competitions, volunteered food, or watched on STRIV.

Thank you to all community members who are deeply invested in our school. Thank you for representing JCC with pride, and congratulations on a great fall season, student-athletes and coaches!

PHONE NUMBER: 402-335-7815
EMAIL: JUSTIN.DAMME@JCCENTRAL.ORG
WEBSITE: WWW.JCCENTRAL.ORG

Veterans Day Program

JOHNSON COUNTY
CENTRAL HIGH
SCHOOL GYM
TECUMSEH, NE

WEDNESDAY
11 NOV 2026
10:00 A.M.

Presentation of the Colors:
American Legion Post #2 & VFW Post 8221

Star-Spangled Banner:
Performed By: High School Choir

Pledge of Allegiance:
Wesley Schmid, Student Council Vice-President

Welcome: Mr. Damme, High School Principal

Welcome/Introduction of Guest Speaker:
Molly Weber, Student Council President

Guest Speaker
CSSC Micah Brookes
Enlisted Navy Recruiter
United States Navy

Performance By: Elementary K-3 Choir
"Our Troops and Veterans" by Teresa Jennings

Quilt of Valor Special Presentation: Erica Albers

Retirement of the Colors:
American Legion Post #2 & VFW Post 8221

Taps Performed by **Anthony Orozco**

ALL VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE INVITED TO EAT LUNCH AT THE SCHOOL FOLLOWING THE PROGRAM. MEAL IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY THE SCHOOL

Middle School Updates

Grades 4-8

Marsha Bacon, Principal

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCT 27	NOV 2	NOV 11	NOV 23	NOV 25	NOV 26–29
Winter Sports Practices Begin	8th Grade UNL Pep Rally	Veterans Day Program	4th Grade Field Trip	11:00 Dismissal	Thanksgiving Break

No School: Mon., Nov. 2 · Mon., Nov. 9 (in-service) · Mon., Nov. 16 · Mon., Nov. 30 (in-service)

HALLOWEEN COSTUME EXPECTATIONS

Students often enjoy dressing up for Halloween! Costumes for any dress-up activity must not interfere with learning. For safety, students will be asked to remove masks and leave faces uncovered during the school day. Dress code will be enforced.

FIRST QUARTER WRAP-UP

The first quarter ended Friday, October 9. Report cards, along with MAP and NSCAS scores, went home with students whose families were unable to attend conferences.

PARENT CONNECTIONS

Sit down together to talk about grades and homework. If your child had a strong quarter, let them know you are proud and continue to encourage them.

Parents can access grades on PowerSchool throughout the school year. Contact the office for assistance or questions

HONOR ROLL

Congratulations to students who earned Honor Roll recognition on the 1st Quarter Honor Roll!

THANK YOU, COOK VFD

A special thank you to Adam Badberg and Jason Brandt of the Cook Volunteer Fire Department for teaching our 4th and 5th graders about fire safety during Fire Prevention Week!

★ VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

Wednesday, Nov. 11 · 10:00 a.m. · Main Gym

We're excited to welcome guest speaker Master Sergeant Zachary Bauman. The program will include Quilt of Valor recipients & the local Color Guard. In addition, students in grades 4–6 will sing and select band members will play the Star-Spangled Banner.

The public is invited! Staying for lunch? Please call the office at (402) 864-4181.

WINTER SPORTS ARE COMING

Junior high girls wrestling and boys basketball practices will begin Tuesday, October 27th. Look at the school calendar for meet and game times, and plan to come cheer on the T-Birds!

8TH GRADE PEP RALLY AT UNL

On Monday, Nov. 2, 8th graders have the opportunity it attend the UNL Sportsmanship Pep Rally, where Husker student-athletes will talk about education, sportsmanship, character, teamwork and responsible decision-making. Students will then cheer on Nebraska Women's Basketball in its home opener vs. San Jose State at noon.

Questions? Call the Cook office at (402) 864-4181 or contact Marsha Bacon on ParentSquare or marsha.bacon@jccentral.org

VETERANS DAY

Cook Program

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2026

TIME: 10:00 AM

JCC Middle School, Cook

Presentation of the Colors

Star-Spangled Banner

Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome: Mrs. Bacon, Middle School Principal

Guest Speaker : Master Sargeant Zachary Bauman

Quilt of Valor Special Presentation

Retirement of the Colors

ALL VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE INVITED TO EAT LUNCH AT THE SCHOOL FOLLOWING THE PROGRAM.
PLEASE NOTIFY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PRIOR 402-864-4181, TO RESERVE A MEAL.
THE MEAL IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY THE SCHOOL

Greetings From the Elementary!

by Beckie Robeson

November 2026

Calling All Mystery Readers!

A few years ago, Mrs. Doeden, one of our 2nd-grade teachers, invited staff, parents, relatives, and other community members to come into our school and be a "Mystery Reader" for the elementary students. This opportunity gave children a chance to hear exciting stories from a variety of different people. Starting in January, we will again invite Mystery Readers to share their love of reading and favorite stories with JCC students. Readers will visit us on Friday mornings at **8:00 a.m.** to share their chosen story with preschool through 3rd-grade students. In the week leading up to our reader, students will receive clues as they guess who the Mystery Reader will be. Please consider being a Mystery Reader for these students, starting in January. If you are interested, you can contact me at school by email, text, or phone. I will also share flyers for students to take home. Thank you!

Cooler Weather

As temperatures begin to fall, please make sure your child wears clothing appropriate for the weather. We will have recess outside as often as possible, so sending warm coats, hats, gloves, and even a scarf will help them stay warm on cooler days.

Lost and Found

Our lost-and-found table is accumulating more items daily. Remind your children to check the table by the elementary auditorium if they are missing jackets, sweatshirts, hats, or anything else they may have left at school.

Important Dates

- **Monday, November 2**: No School
- **Monday, November 9**: No School, Teacher Inservice
- **Wednesday, November 11**: Veterans' Day Program, **10 a.m.**
- **Friday, November 13**: Staff vs. Student Basketball game **6 p.m.**
- **Monday, November 16**: No School
- **Monday, November 23**: **School In Session**
- **Wednesday, November 25**: Kindergarten Thanksgiving Program, **12:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, November 25**: Early Dismissal, **1 p.m.**
- **November 26-27**: No school, Thanksgiving Break
- **Monday, November 30**: No School, Teacher Inservice

Contact Info:

Please feel free to contact me at anytime during the school year

email: beckie.robeson@jccentral.org phone: 402-335-7839

Journey Together...Creating Opportunities...Committed to Excellence

Keeping Our Students Safe: Understanding the Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are always top priorities. As parents, you trust us with your children each day, and we take that responsibility seriously. A key part of keeping our schools safe is ensuring students and staff know what to do in an unexpected situation.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has partnered with the "I Love U Guys" Foundation to provide schools with resources and training for the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). This approach provides consistent terminology and clear procedures for responding to emergencies and other situations that may occur in or around a school. Using common language helps schools and emergency responders work together more effectively to protect students and staff (Nebraska Department of Education [NDE], n.d.).

What Is the Standard Response Protocol?

The SRP is based on five actions that help schools respond appropriately to different situations. According to the "I Love U Guys" Foundation (n.d.), these actions include:

- HOLD - "In Your Room or Area. Clear the Halls."
  - Students and staff remain in their classrooms or designated areas and keep hallways clear. This may occur during a medical emergency or another situation requiring restricted hallway access.
- SECURE - "Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors."
  - Students and staff move inside, and staff secure exterior doors when a potential threat is outside the building. Classroom activities may continue as normal. Secure is used to safeguard building occupants.
- LOCKDOWN - "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight."
  - When a threat is inside the building, students and staff move to secure locations, remain quiet, and stay out of sight. Lockdown secures individual rooms and keeps occupants quiet and in place.
- EVACUATE - "To the Announced Location."
  - Students and staff move to a designated location when they need to leave their current area.
- SHELTER - State the Hazard and Safety Strategy.
  - Students and staff follow specific protective actions during situations such as severe weather or other environmental hazards.

The Nebraska Department of Education (2025) emphasizes that these five actions provide a common approach to responding to various school safety situations.

Practicing Safety Without Creating Fear

For our youngest learners, we must teach safety procedures in ways appropriate to their age and developmental level. Our goal is to help children feel prepared, confident, and secure, not frightened.

Just as students learn everyday classroom routines, they also need opportunities to become familiar with safety expectations. The Nebraska Department of Education (n.d.) explains that understanding these procedures can help reduce anxiety and improve responses during an actual event.

How Can Families Help?

Families play an important role in school safety. We encourage parents to learn the five SRP actions and reinforce the importance of following teacher directions during safety drills.

At home, ask your child what they know about school safety procedures. Remind them that drills are opportunities to practice staying safe and that school adults have plans to protect them.

During an emergency, families should follow official school instructions rather than coming to the building immediately. If students need to be picked up at an alternate location, the school will provide reunification instructions. The Nebraska Department of Education (2025) explains that the Standard Reunification Method (SRM) gives schools an organized process for safely returning students to their parents or guardians after an emergency.

Our commitment is simple: We want every child to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. By working together and helping students understand safety procedures calmly and reassuringly, we create a school environment where preparedness is part of our daily commitment to student well-being.

Thank you for trusting us with your children and for partnering with us to keep our school community safe.

Contact Info:

Please feel free to contact me at anytime during the school year

email: beckie.robeson@jccentral.org phone: 402-335-7839

Journey Together...Creating Opportunities...Committed to Excellence

Little Pumpkins, Big Adventures

Mrs. Borrenpohl's and Ms. Gabriel's little pumpkins had a big adventure at Roca Berry Farm! Despite the chilly fall weather, our kindergarteners had a wonderful day exploring the farm and enjoying all the fun that autumn has to offer. The students loved visiting the farm animals, taking a hayrack ride, and picking out their very own pumpkin to take home.

It was a day filled with excitement, laughter, and hands-on learning as we experienced the sights and sounds of the fall season together. From the bumpy hayrack ride to finding the perfect pumpkin, our little learners made special memories with their classmates that will last long after the leaves have fallen. What a wonderful way to celebrate fall and make the most of our big adventures!

JCC Student Health News

Hearing & Vision Screenings

December 1st

The ESU 4 Health Van will be at JCC on December 1st to provide hearing and vision screenings for all students. If a student does not pass a screening, a referral will be sent home for further evaluation. These screenings help support our students' health, well-being, and success at school!

Flu Prevention

Let's Keep Our School Healthy!

Flu season is here! Please encourage your student to:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.
- Stay home when sick.
- Get the flu vaccine.

Thank you for helping us keep our school community healthy!

Winter Clothing & Outdoor Recess

Bundle Up for the Cold! ❄️

As the weather gets colder, please make sure your student has a warm coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat for outdoor recess. Dressing for the weather helps students stay warm and enjoy their time outside!

Healthy Holiday Habits

Healthy Habits for a Happy Holiday Season!

The holidays are just around the corner! Help your student stay healthy by encouraging them to:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Take time to relax and manage stress.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.

Wishing all our JCC families a healthy and happy holiday season!

NOTES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Mrs. Olivia Reuter

EducationQuest Financial Aid and Fill Out the FAFSA Night

Treve Florom from the EducationQuest Lincoln office will be here on Wedensday, November 18th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. All juniors, seniors, and parents are welcome to attend. First, he will go over some important financial aid information for families, then he will be here to help any families who want to complete the FAFSA. All JCC students who complete the FAFSA before December 31st are eligible for a $20 gift card courtesy of the College Access Grant that our school has been awarded. All Nebraska students who complete the FAFSA are also eligible to apply for one of seventy-five $1000 scholarships available from EducationQuest.

The Application for Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarships Opens December 1st

On The application for Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation scholarships opens on December 1st, 2026 for high school seniors. All applications must be completed and submitted by March 1st at 5:00 PM. There are no exceptions where late applications are accepted for this scholarship program. A student's FAFSA must be complete before they are able to submit their Buffett application, so any student planning to apply for a Buffett scholarship should get started on their FAFSA right away. The application has several steps and cannot be completed in one day. It is best to get started on this application as soon after it opens as possible. Students go to this website to start the application process on December 1st or after.
https://buffettscholarships.org/applicants

Nebraska's Universal FAFSA Requirement- All Seniors in the Class of 2027 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.

NOTES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR (Cont.)

Mrs. Olivia Reuter

ACT National Testing at JCC

All JCC students are welcome to sign up to take the ACT at JCC High School on national testing dates (specific Saturdays or Sundays). Students sign up at act.org. The main reason to take the ACT multiple times is to help earn additional scholarship money. Some scholarships still have ACT requirements and many four-year colleges or universities consider the ACT in one way or another when it comes to determining institutional scholarship amounts. Students choose to take the ACT on national testing dates if they want to; this testing is always optional. This is different from the state-mandated ACT test for juniors which is taken on a school day in March. The next ACT at JCC that students can sign up for is on Sunday, December 14th. The registration deadline is November 7th for that one. Students who have not had the school pay for a test yet and who want that option, need to see Mrs. Reuter to register. The school will pay for one test for students during their sophomore or junior year, and for one more test during their senior year.

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. 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!

INTRODUCING THE CLASS OF 2027

Each month, I will feature some of our seniors at JCC High School. **This month, meet Prestin, Regan, Aurora, Jonathan, A.J. and Ayden.**

Prestin Thomas

Prestin Thomas is the son of Travis and Mikaela Thomas. He lives in the country near Cook. He has one brother, Tucker, age 20, and one sister, Kenna, age 15. During high school, Prestin has been involved in football, wrestling, one act, and FFA. His favorite high school class was Welding because it was fun. His most challenging classes have been his English clases because they have been a lot of work. Outside of school, Prestin likes to hang out with his friends and he also likes to listen to country music. After high school, Prestin is interested in going into the Diesel program at SCC. He is interested in working for NMC CAT in the future because it looks like a fun company to work for that offers many jobs that would interest him. In ten years, Prestin says that he will be living somewhere in Nebraska.

NOTES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR (Cont.)

Mrs. Olivia Reuter

REGAN Campbell-Thies

Regan Lynn Campbell-Thies is the son of Melissa Campbell and Bob Thies of Elk Creek. He has one sister, Rylin, who is 13. During his high school years, Regan has been involved in FBLA, FFA, basketball, football, and golf. Regan's favorite high school class is Composition 2 because they get a lot of time to do their work, and he has good classmates in that class. His most challenging class is Physics because it is a super challenging class that pushes him. Regan's favorite school lunch is the popcorn chicken bowl. As of now, Regan is considering attending the University of Nebraska-Kearney, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Southeast Community College-Milford. Right now, he is thinking about going to pharmacy school or into something engineering-related. He has been interested in becoming a pharacist since he was a little kid, but is open to other options where he can use his academic strengths. Outside of school, Regan likes to golf. His favorite band is Florida Georgia line, and his favorite TV show is Friends. When asked to predict his life in ten years, Regan replied, "Hopefully, I will be finished with all of my school, and still living in Southeast Nebraska. By that time, I will maybe have a wife and one kid."

AURORA Stephens

Aurora Belle Stephens is the daughter of Tabbatha and Mark Stephens of Cook. She has one brother, Giaus, who is 14. During her high school years, Aurora's extra-curricular activities have included art club, choir, Skills USA, and bowling. Aurora's favorite high school class is student assist because she gets to help a teacher cut things out and put things in the places where they need to be. She says that this is better than taking another class where she might be stuck writing huge essays. Her most challenging class is composition one because there are so many rules and the class is large so sometimes it is hard to hear over the chatter. Her favorite school lunch is chicken alfredo. Outside of school, Aurora likes to play video games. She also likes to go outside and walk around with gloves on and collect random items. Her favorite band is Maretu because they have real-life based songs. Her favorite books are the Wings of Fire books by Tui T. Sutherland, and her favorite movies are the James Roberts' Transformers movies. When asked about her plans after high school, Aurora replied, "I am not going to college right away as I need more time to plan what career I am going after. If I rush into college without a clear plan, there would be a definite 98.4% chance that I would drop out of college. I do know that I am going into criminology for sure though. The careers that interest me the most are crime scene clearner, detective, FBI agent, and really any career that deals with investigating crimes." When asked to predict her life ten years from now, Aurora said, "I will be 28. I hope I will have a good paying job and I hope I will have moved away from tornado alley. I hope I live somewhere where my Lego cars and Transformers figurines don't get destroyed.

NOTES FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR (Cont.)

Mrs. Olivia Reuter

Jonathan DeFreece

Jonathan DeFreece is the son of Steve and Paula DeFreece of Tecumseh. He has two siblings, Schyler, age 26, and Gabe, age 22. His favorite high school class is Composition 2 because it has been fun and relaxing so far. His most challenging high school class is Zoology because science is hard. During high school, Jonathan has been involved in cross country, track, and FBLA. His favorite school lunch is spaghetti. Outside of school, Jonathan likes to run. His favorite band is the Red Hot Chili Peppers. After high school, Jonathan wants to study broadcasting at either the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or Northeast Community College. His future career goal is to become either a sports commentator or a sports photographer. In ten years, Jonathan predicts that he will be working for a big sports company.

A.J. Rautenbach

A.J. Rautenbach is the son of Andre and Dana Rautenbach. He lives right outside of Tecumseh. He has two siblings, KK, age 30, and Rudy, age 28. During his high school years, A.J. has been involved in football, basketball, track, choir, FFA, FBLA, Skills USA, and FCA. His favorite high school class is strength training and his hardest class is Psychology because it involves a lot of work. His favorite school lunch is cheese sticks. Outside of school, A.J. likes to hang out with his friends and play baseball. In the past, his favorite TV show was Wild Krats. His favorite movie is Spiderman. After high school, A.J. plans to attend Northeast Community College to study business and play baseball. He will see how far he can go with baseball, and then after that, he will most likely work with his dad at Kudu Lawn and Landscape. When asked about his life in ten years, A.J. predicts, "I will be playing professional baseball for the Kansas City Royals. I will live outside of Kansas City on an acreage, with my wife and kids.

Ayden Cannon

Ayden Cannon is the son of Dez Lade and Lucas Lade of Tecumseh. He has two siblings, Tanner, age 21, and McKenna, age 15. During high school, he has been involved in basketball, FFA, and choir. His favorite high school class was Crop Management and his most challenging classes have been his English classes because he doesn't like to read. His favorite school lunch is the popcorn chicken bowl. Outside of school, he likes to ride dirt bikes and hang out with friends. Ayden's favorite music is country music, his favorite movie is Spiderman, and his favorite book is Fast Break by Mike Lupica. After high school, Ayden plans to attend either SCC-Milford or SCC-Beatrice to study agriculture, mechanics, and/or diesel. In the future, he would like to be both a farmer and a mechanic. In ten years, Ayden predicts, "I will have a lot of money. I will be farming right outside of Tecumseh. I will not be married and I will not have any kids."

News from the Director of Student Services and Special Education

Dr. Laura Rademacher

November 2026

Gratitude, Growth & Belonging

🍂 **Every Student Has Something to Be Thankful For**

As November arrives, we are reminded that some of the most meaningful successes in education are not measured by grades or test scores. Sometimes success is a student asking for help instead of shutting down, making a new friend, trying something difficult, or learning to manage a big emotion.

At Johnson County Central, we believe **ALL students can learn when given the right support.** This month, we encourage everyone to recognize the small victories. Growth looks different for every student, and every step forward deserves celebration.

🧡 **Gratitude Builds Connection**

Did you know that practicing gratitude can help children develop stronger relationships, build positive thinking habits, and recognize their own strengths? Gratitude doesn't mean pretending everything is perfect. It means learning to recognize the good things, even when life feels challenging.

Try these simple activities at home:

- **Three Good Things:** At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share three positive things from their day.
- **Celebrate the Effort:** Instead of focusing only on results, recognize persistence: "I noticed you kept trying even when that was hard."
- **Thank-You Challenge:** Encourage your child to thank someone at school who makes their day better.
- **Strength Spotting:** Ask, "What's something you're proud of learning or improving this month?"

🧠 **Student Progress, Not Perfection**

Children develop academic, social, emotional, and executive functioning skills at different rates. Skills like managing time, staying organized, regulating emotions, and asking for help are learned through practice, modeling, and consistent support.

One of the most powerful things adults can do is **replace "You should know how to do this" with "Let's figure out what support will help you succeed."**

At JCC, our goal isn't simply helping students complete today's tasks. It's helping them develop the confidence, independence, and skills they need for their futures.

📋 **Parent Survey Request**

If your student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), please take a few minutes to complete the **Parent Survey**. Your feedback helps the state understand what is working well, identify areas for improvement, and strengthen the partnership between families and the school. Please complete the survey by using the link or QR Code provided or ask your student's IEP case manager.

🏡 **Preparing for Holiday Breaks**

Changes in routines can be exciting, but they can also be overwhelming for children. A little predictability goes a long way. Before Thanksgiving break, consider talking with your child about upcoming plans, maintaining consistent sleep routines, offering quiet breaks during busy gatherings, and allowing extra time for transitions.

Remember: Predictability is kind, and flexibility is a skill we can teach.

❤️ **Thankful for Our JCC Community**

This November, we are especially grateful for the families, educators, paraprofessionals, and community members who show up for our students every day.

Together, through **Communication, Accountability, Respect, Grace, and Belonging**, we are creating a school community where every student has a place, a purpose, and a pathway to success

Dear Parent/Guardian of a Student with an IEP:

Johnson County Central's Parent Survey is the data collection for the SPP Part B Indicator 8 – Parent Involvement. This data is collected from Nebraska school districts and shared with the Nebraska Department of Education. All responses are CONFIDENTIAL and demographic information collected is not for identification purposes.

The PERSONALIZED link to Johnson Co Central Public Schs Parent Survey is:
https://questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?tt=yoPhtBE2aDZm5W7rNPBodhljFGFQZs46

All parent survey results must be submitted to NDE. Note that there is also a Spanish translation of the survey, which can be accessed by clicking on the dropdown menu on the top right corner of the survey screen.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Johnson County Central Special Education Department

****Families with more than one child receiving Special Education and Related Services must complete one survey for each child and answer all questions about their experiences for that child.

QR CODE works for English or Spanish

Estimado/a Padre/Madre o Tutor,

La Encuesta para Padres del Johnson County Central es la recopilación de datos para el Indicador 8 de la Parte B del SPP – Participación de los Padres. Estos datos se recopilan de los distritos escolares de Nebraska y se comparten con el Departamento de Educación de Nebraska. Todas las respuestas son CONFIDENCIALES y la información demográfica recopilada no se utiliza para fines de identificación.

El enlace PERSONALIZADO para la Encuesta para Padres de Johnson Co Central Public Schs es:
https://questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?tt=yoPhtBE2aDZm5W7rNPBodhljFGFQZs46

Todos los resultados de la encuesta para padres deben enviarse a NDE. Tenga en cuenta que también existe una traducción al español de la encuesta, la cual se puede acceder haciendo clic en el menú desplegable en la esquina superior derecha de la pantalla de la encuesta.

¡Gracias por su cooperación!

Departamento de Educación Especial Central del Condado de Johnson

****Las familias con más de un hijo que recibe Educación Especial y Servicios Relacionados deben completar una encuesta por cada hijo y responder todas las preguntas sobre sus experiencias con ese hijo.

VOCAL MUSIC - MRS. FRICKE

November, 2026

Crete Junior Honor Choral Clinic

Mrs. Fricke was able to select 10 JCC 7th & 8th grade students to attend the Crete Junior High Choral Clinic. The students were selected using the same process as the ECNC selections with an audition through Mrs. Fricke. Soprano - Grace Fazel, Ada Goodrich, Prezleigh Hazen; Alto - Madilyn Jensen, Kelly Kongmanyvong, Mackenzie Sell, Mackenzie Silos; Baritone - Carter Allen, Jude Fricke, Brayden Garday.

The singers will start rehearsing at 9:30 AM, Thursday, November 5 at Crete High School. A public concert will be at 5:00 PM. There is a $1.00 admission charge for those attending the concert.

Conference Honor Choir

Students selected for our ECNC Honor Choir (East Central Nebraska Conference) to be held at JCC High School on Monday, November 9: High school: Soprano - Nevaeh Brown, Abby Burki, Tegan Topp; Alto - Abby Blomstedt, Adree Case, Kaitlyn Clements; Tenor - Kene Ofoegbu, Tony Orozco, Landon Toohey; Bass - Kael Fricke, Jesus Hurtado, Edgar Prado, Alex Thipphavong. Middle school: Soprano - Grace Fazel, Ada Goodrich, Prezleigh Hazen, Nathaly Hurtado Arellano; Alto - Madilyn Jensen, Kelly Kongmanyvong, Lillian Nelson, Mackenzie Sell, Mackenzie Silos; Baritone - Carter Allen, Jude Fricke, Brayden Garday, Axel Prado.

The Concert will take place in the JCC high school gym at 7:00pm.

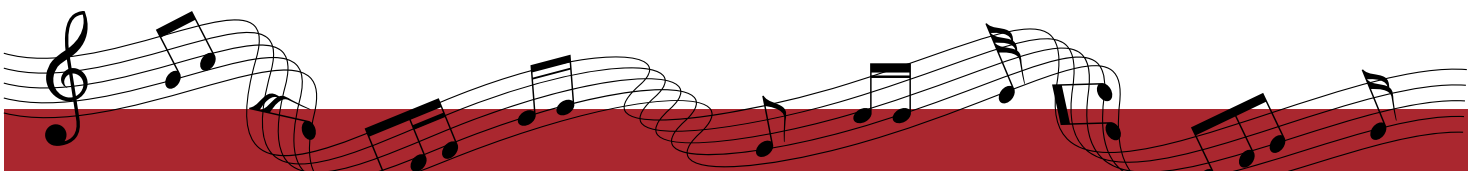
2026 Nebraska All State Choir

Two students were selected for the 2026 Nebraska All State Choir: Tony Orozo and Kene Ofoegbu. They were two of seven students who auditioned for this prestigious event. Students from all across the state of Nebraska audition for this event and it is difficult to be accepted. The audition process takes place in September with music being selected and rehearsed starting in May of the previous year. Tony and Kene will attend rehearsals in Lincoln on November 18th, 19th, and 20th with a concert to take place at the Lied Center in Lincoln on the 20th.

Music Calendar

Fall-Winter performances will include the following:

- Crete Junior High Choral Clinic Concert - Tuesday, November 5, 5:00 PM in Crete
- ECNC Honor Choir Concert - Monday, November 9, 7:00 PM at JCC
- High School Concert - Tuesday, December 1, 7:00 PM in Tecumseh
- 4-8 Grade Winter Concerts - Friday, December 11, 7:00 PM in Cook
- K-3 Elementary Program - Monday, December 14, 7:00 PM in Tecumseh



November 2026

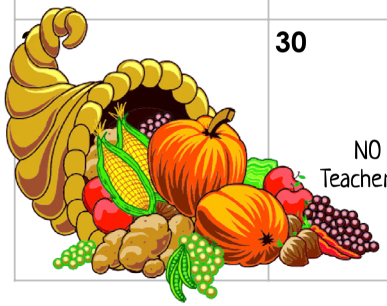
Monthly Calendar View

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2 **NO SCHOOL**	3	4	5 **Varsity Volleyball** @ State **JH Girls Wrestling** @ Auburn - 4:30 PM	6 **Varsity Volleyball** @ State	7 **Varsity Volleyball** @ State
8	9 **NO SCHOOL** Teacher In-Service **ECNC JH/HS Vocal Clinic** @ JCC - 1 PM	10 **Unified Bowling** @ Syracuse @ Arbor Lanes (NC) - 4 PM	11 JCC School Board Meeting - 6 PM @ HS Computer Lab (Rm 204)	12 **One-Act Triangular** @ Elementary Audtorium 6 PM	13 Staff vs Students Basketball Fundraiser - 6 PM	14
15	16 **NO SCHOOL** **WINTER PRACTICES BEGIN** **Unified Bowling** @ ECNC @ TBD - 2 PM **JH Girls Wrestling** @ Weeping Water - 2 PM	17 **One-Act** @ ECNC @ Palmrya - 9 AM **JH Boys Basketball** vs FC Sacred Heart - 4:30 PM	18	19 **Unified Bowling** Home Invite @ JT's Bar & Grill - 4 PM **JH Boys Basketball** @ Freeman - 4:30 PM	20 **JH Girls Wrestling** @ Falls City - 2:30 PM	21
22	23 **Unified Bowling** @ Auburn - 12:30 PM	24 **JH Boys Basketball** @ Pawnee City - 4 PM	25 Early Dismissal 1 PM Kindergarten Thanksgiving Program - 12:30 PM	26 **NO SCHOOL**	27 **NO SCHOOL**	28
29	30 **NO SCHOOL** Teacher In-Service **Play Production** @ Districts **Unified Bowling** @ Districts	**ALL ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**				

November 2026

JCC

JCC Lunch Menu

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 	**2** NO SCHOOL	**3** Chicken Fajita on WG Tortilla Spanish Rice Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**4** Grilled Chicken Breast on WG Bun Hot Veggie Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**5** Chili w/ Cheese Stick Cinnamon Roll Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**6** National Nacho Day Nachos WG Breadstick Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**7**
8	**9** NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service	**10** Thai Meatballs Fried Rice Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**11** Scalloped Potatoes w/Ham Cornbread Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk Veterans Day	**12** Walking Taco Black Bean & Corn Salsa Dinner Roll Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**13** Chicken Patty/WG Bun Potato Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**14**
15	**16** NO SCHOOL	**17** Chicken Nuggets Hot Veggie Breadstick Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**18** Pulled Pork/WG Bun Baked Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**19** Turkey Mashed Potato/Gravy Dinner Roll Pumpkin Dessert Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**20** Calzone Hot Veggie Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**21**
22	**23** Shredded BBQ Chicken on WG Bun Baked Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**24** Chef's Choice Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**25** 1:00 PM Dismissal Pizza Corn Fruit & Veggie Bar Milk	**26** NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Break 	**27** NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Break	**28**
	**30** NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service					

Menu is subject to change without notice
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JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PO Box 338
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PO Box 225
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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.