

Superintendent's News



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*Christmas Dinner is
December 21st*



We recently received the exit report from our School Improvement External Visitation Team. School improvement is a continuous process and so as expected we received several positive commendations and some recommendations which will serve to guide our school improvement process during the next five-year cycle. Thanks again to staff, students, patrons, and parents who played a role in making this process a success. As we look to the next five-year cycle we will be looking for a few community members to serve on our school improvement committee. If you would be willing to dedicate your time and effort to the improvement of our Hay Springs educational system, please stop by the office and visit with me about the process. School improvement is and must be a continuous process in which you really never arrive. We strive to improve educational learning opportunities for our students and continually look for areas in our educational process where we can improve. It is with this in mind that I am reminding all of our mission, vision and goal statement of Hay Springs Public School.

Mission Statement

The Mission of Hay Springs Schools in cooperation with families and community, is to empower students within an emotionally supportive and physically safe environment with the academic, social, physical and technological skills to achieve success as responsible, self-disciplined citizens of a global society.

Vision Statement

"Empower Students to Achieve Lifelong Success."

Hay Springs Goal

All students will demonstrate an increase in math proficiency across the curriculum.

As we return from our Thanksgiving break and time with family and friends I am reminded of the many, many things we as Americans have to be grateful for. We have a choice every morning to appreciate the wonderful things in our life or to dwell on our struggles. I want to encourage each of you to start your day with a brief pause to list three things you are grateful for. If you can get in the habit of doing this minor little detail on a daily basis, you will be amazed at how you begin to see many more positive things around you, than things to be upset about. The reality is things around you don't change it is you who will change and when we look for good, we find it. If we get up in the morning and look for things to be upset about, we certainly can find them. The truth is we get to decide every day how we will look at life. We can get out of bed and say "Good Morning Lord" and see all the wonderful things in our life, or when we hear the same alarm our response may be "Good Lord It's Morning". How we start our day has a great effect on the effectiveness of our day. At Hay Springs School one of my goals is to help our entire staff and student population focus on the many blessing we have in life and support each other in positive ways as we work together to find solutions to any and all problems that come our way.

I recently attended the State Educational Conference and had the privilege of listening to a very inspiring keynote speaker. At the age of nine he was playing with gas and fire and received burns over 100% of his body

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1) *Supt's News*

With 87% of those burns being 3rd degree burns. His parents were told by the specialists that he had less than 1/2 of 1% chance of survival. As a parent and grandparent I can't imagine getting that message from a doctor. Sometimes when we think we are having a bad day we don't need to look very far to see someone who needs our support and has far bigger struggles and challenges than we have. With the support, prayers and inspiration of family and friends this young man found the strength and inspiration to fight through his challenge. Today he spends his life speaking to people with his message of how to deal with life when you receive those struggles. We will all experience challenges and struggles in life. His advice in a brief summary includes; when we face struggles; Get rid of "Why me?" instead ask "Why am I so Blessed?" Instead of asking "Who cares?" ask "What more can I do?" Do we participate in life/school with the excitement of a first grader or the apathy of a senior? As each of us look at our own life and daily activities think for a minute about how much more exciting life would be if we had the excitement of a child about what we have to do each day. Another statement he made, that makes our lives challenging is "Motivation lasts about as long as our last shower" We need to feed ourselves new positive thoughts every day. Our society feeds us much more negative than positive so it is a daily challenge to focus on the positive.

We have our "After School Program" started for our K-6th grade students and will be provided additional academic assistance and some fun and experiential activities from 4:00 until 5:30 Monday through Thursday afternoons. The program will begin with recess from 4:00 – 4:15 for the younger students, then from 4:15 until 5:00 all students will focus on academics with a snack at 5:00 followed by educational, experiential learning activities until 5:30. If your students are involved in this program please be prompt to pick them up at 5:30 at the cafeteria door. Our staff will not be providing student supervision after 5:45.

Our students continue to be very active as the One-Act team, under the direction of Mr. Bounous and Ms. Marx, has performed locally and successfully competed at conference and district competition. Thanks to the sponsors and the students for your efforts and dedication in representing Hay Springs School so professionally in this event.

With the football and volleyball seasons behind us students have received some State, district and conference awards and now are involved in basketball and wrestling. Watch for game times as we begin these seasons these students will soon be performing for our enjoyment.

We had a very successful book fair and our elementary and music students are busy preparing for the Christmas concerts.

As I conclude this message it is with sadness that I acknowledge the loss of a friend in Mike Hunzeker. I have only known Mike for a short period of time but he will truly be missed. I quickly learned respect for Mike as the president of our board of education and the continuous role he played in efforts to improve the educational system at Hay Springs. He always seemed to have the quality of education for our students on the top of his role as a board member but followed with fiscal responsibility. Mike will be greatly missed on the Hay Springs Board of Education and in our community. I want to convey my deepest sympathy to his family in their loss.

With that being said, we will be needing someone to complete Mike's term on the Board of Education. If you have a desire to serve in this very important role, please give it some serious consideration. Following the December meeting we will be advertising and I will have applications available in my office.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support of our educational system.

Merry Christmas to all, and have a great finish to your year.

Student Council

By Ms. Holtmeier

Non-perishable Food Drive

The annual food drive is set to begin November 27. We will be collecting food for the churches to deliver before Christmas. We will collect **non-perishable items** through December 13. Please keep in mind that last year they asked for some specific items such as diapers and toilet paper, among other things. Please dig deep and help us, help those with fewer advantages.

Student Council decided that we would run a contest by class, but due to the different sizes (i.e. 2nd grade has 20, 11th grade has 8) we will be counting the non-perishable items and dividing by the number of students in the class. Please keep in mind that items that come in an enclosed case, or are sold by the multiple item, such as ramen noodles or pop, will be counted as one item. The winning class will receive \$50 dollars to keep and use as they please, or donate with their items. Second place will receive \$25 and third place will receive \$10.



illustrations of com #1091134

On another note, the **Middle School Winter Ball** is set for Friday, March 2, 2018 from 7:00-10:30 pm. Student Council has decided on a Country Cowboy theme. So please come dressed in your finest "cowboy, cowgirl" garb! No Daisy Dukes allowed! An eighth grade Prince and Princess will be crowned at the dance. This dance is open to 6th-8th graders and eligibility for the week of Feb. 26-Mar. 1 is required to attend.

NO SCHOOL

December 25—January 1st

The school offices will also be closed.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

By Melissa Mracek

Clover Buds Spreading Christmas Cheer



The December session of the Hay Springs Clover Buds will be held on **Monday, December 18th at 4 pm in the Distance Learning Room. The Clover Bud members will spread Christmas Cheer to the nursing home residents by making a simple treat and decorating homemade ornaments. Afterwards the youth can help deliver the goodies to the nursing home.**

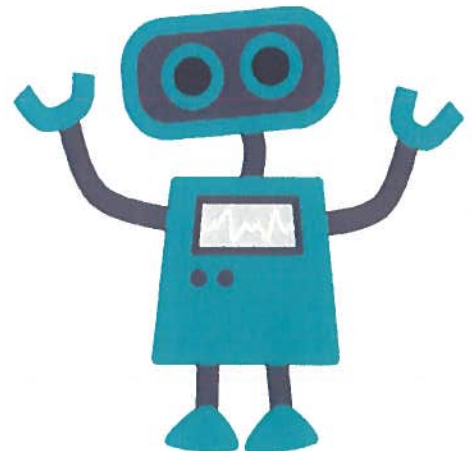
December Baking Basics and Sewing

The December Baking Basics will be held on Friday, December 22nd starting at 9 am. In the morning the youth will create multiple types of goodies to share with the nursing home residents. Starting at 11 am the youth will begin sewing. The group will be taking a break from their quilts to sew a craft for the nursing home residents. This workshop is free for everyone to attend. Please contact Melissa Mracek at (308) 327-2312 if you have any questions.

JUNIOR ROBOTICS PRACTICES FOR DECEMBER

The December Junior Robotics practices will be from 4 to 5:30 pm in the Distance Learning room. Below are the tentative dates.

- December 5
- December 14
- December 21



Winter is here!!

Keep a close eye on the weather and make sure your child has a hat, gloves, and coat with them each day!



Music Notes



*7th & 8th grade and High School Christmas concert:

Nights the Lights and Music-**Friday, December 8th at 7:30 pm**

(After the Santa Soup Cook-off)

*1st, 2nd & 3rd grade students Christmas Concert:

The Polar Express-will be on **Monday, Dec. 18th at 7pm**

We will be having cookies, hot chocolate and a visit from Santa right after the concert in the cafeteria! We are asking that every family of a 1st, 2nd or 3rd grader bring a plate of cookies to share for this event. Hot chocolate will be provided!



Make sure to mark these dates on your calendar:

Nights, the Lights & Music Friday, Dec. 8th 7:30pm Auditorium

1st-3rd Grade Christmas Concert Monday, Dec. 18th 7pm Auditorium

Library News

Thanks to everyone for making our Fall Book Fair a great success. Our Cookies and Cocoa night gave parents a chance to check out the books early in the fair. Some parents attending the Thanksgiving lunch took the opportunity to make some last minute purchases. With the Rewards Dollars we added over 50 books to our collection.



Report cards will be available for pickup on January 8th

Girls Basketball Season Preview

By Coach Badje

Faces change, but the game stays the same. With the loss of 5 graduates in 2017, a coach's thoughts go to what he had, the knowledge and experience that has been developed and how 'poof' it's gone, moved on. It's rewarding yet somewhat sad to see the athletes grow up and leave. You remember their freshman year and wonder how are they ever going to learn what they need to know and then gradually, yet often in spurts, they learn and excel and the bond of a "team" is created. Lost 5, but gained 7 freshmen Lady Hawks this year. Now the task starts again and you remind yourself how those greenhorns that just graduated came and went in the blink of an eye.

Ok, so much for sentiment. Here's where the rubber meets the road. The Lady Hawks will be returning two starters, Emma Roberts and Hailey Summers. Prospects are high for these two young ladies. Besides their scoring and defensive assets, they have developed some great leadership abilities and have taken on the mentoring of the younger players well. Junior, Jessi Badje and Sophomore, Katie Agler had some varsity floor time last year, so there is some good familiarity with the program. They bring a lot of speed and intensity to the team. Sam Kearns and Erin Kadelcek round out the returners and have shown good improvement from last year. This year's freshmen are, Joce Varvel, Jaiden Anderson, Bailey Scherbarth, Riley Wolken, Hannah Wohl, Ruth West and Chrissy Larsen. Each one has revealed some valuable skills waiting to be honed and shown off. I am excited for the talent and the good coachable attitudes I have been dealt this season.

You will just have to see for yourselves. Please come and support your team and your community and help us regain that culture of "Hawk Pride". The girls work hard and show up each day ready to learn. They are your future, how great for them and for you, if you would encourage them with your presence and words on how you see them develop and grow in strength and character and ability.

Boys Basketball Season Preview

By Coach Borm



In the 2016-17 season, the boys' basketball team struggled through a disappointing 5-17 season with 5 losses coming by 10 points or less. This proves that we showed signs of life as a unit last year and can only get better and build upon those glimpses of good basketball this year. We bring back four players that started at least one game last year: Trent Reed (2nd team All-Panhandle Conference), Wesley Tlustos, Kaelob Marx, and Johnny Toof, and the return of Tony Toof that missed most of last season after knee surgery. We also have great additions to our team in the freshmen class including Brodey Planansky, Charles Schiaffo and Jace Langford. Jake Roberts and Sean West are two other returning letter winners from a year ago. On top of all of these components, two athletes that were state qualifying wrestlers a year ago decided to play basketball this year, Coy Wolken and Baiden Planansky. Tomo Sato, the foreign exchange student from Japan is also out for the team.

Regular season play opens up Friday, December 1st at home against Cody-Kilgore. However we were able to play an exhibition game against Sioux County on November 21st. We were able to pick up a victory in this matchup 42-35 behind 17 points from Junior Trent Reed. I look forward to seeing the crowd we can get for our opening home game against Cody-Kilgore. Go Hawks!

HS FB WRAP-UP



ach Borm



The Hay Springs Football Team finished an excellent season at 8-2 after falling to Riverside in the semi-finals of the 6-man state football playoffs. Riverside would go on to win the State Championship for their 4th title in a row in the 6-man class. The semi-final berth marked the best finish in school history for Hay Springs Football and that is something that this group of kids can hang their hat on. The Hawks finished the season winning 6 in a row before the final loss to Riverside. This brings Hay Springs' cumulative 6-man record to 13-5 (.722) in two seasons. Our season results were as follows:

Vs. Sioux County	W, 80-56
Vs. South Platte	W, 60-19
@ Cody-Kilgore	L, 18-27
Vs. Arthur County	W, 49-36
Vs. Fleming (CO)	W, 50-34
@ Minatare	W, 54-46
Vs. Potter-Dix	W, 54-8
@ Hyannis	W, 44-34
@Spalding Academy (Quarterfinals)	W, 26-20
Riverside (Semi-Finals)	L, 34-80

Trent Reed finished the season with 2,401 yards and 37 touchdowns on the ground and added 389 yards and 6 touchdowns passing for a total of 2,790 total yards of offense and 43 touchdowns accounted for on the season. Trent also helped control the defensive unit with 119 tackles and 5 interceptions.

Bryce Running Hawk accumulated 756 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns to go along with a solid 385 yards and 6 touchdowns on the ground. Defensively, Bryce helped the team with 123 tackles.

Both Reed and Running Hawk's rushing and receiving

yards, respectively, were the best in the state of Nebraska at the 6 man level.

Coy Wolken had a solid year catching the ball as well with 243 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Baiden Planansky 617 yards and 11 touchdowns to just 3 interceptions. He also had 90 tackles defensively to go with 2 interceptions (both in the quarterfinal game at Spalding).

2017 West All Division Team Members:

1st team: Trent Reed (RB), Bryce Running Hawk (E), Thomas Scherbarth (C)

2nd team: Kaelob Marx (DL), Coy Wolken (DL), Trent Reed (P)

2017 All State Team Members:

1st team: Trent Reed (RB)

2nd team: Bryce Running Hawk (E)

HM: Thomas Scherbarth (C), Kaelob Marx (DT)



HS WRESTLING PREVIEW

By Coach McCance

This up coming wrestling season we have two state qualifiers on the team, Austin Anderson at 113 and Bryce Running Hawk at 182. Having the experience of wrestling at state will be a great asset for these two young wrestlers. We also have one Freshmen Zeke Wesley that will compete at 220. This season we will face some different challenges with a tougher schedule in hope to prepare us for state competition. The new tournament we pick up this year is the Chadron invite which is a two day multi state tournament with teams for Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota and Nebraska. We open the season Dec. 1st and 2nd at Custer South Dakota.



Counselor's To Do List

in Marx

EducationQuest Foundation December 2017

College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

New College Timeline will keep you on track to college

EducationQuest has launched a new [College Timeline](#) for students in grades 9-12 that spells out steps you should take during fall, winter, spring, and summer to plan for college.

The Timeline also allows you to add your own tasks, get reminders when it's time to complete tasks, and check off tasks when they're complete. You can access these features by creating and/or logging into your [MyEducationQuest](#) account at EducationQuest.org.

Check it out and give it a try. It will make the college planning process more manageable!

What to expect after you submit your FAFSA

The [FAFSA](#) opened October 1 so many of you have already completed and submitted your form. Here's what happens next:

Expect a Student Aid Report (SAR). You'll receive it via an email link if you provided an email address on your FAFSA. *Deja Moo: The feeling that you've heard this bull before. The SAR acknowledges that your FAFSA was received, and if you need to take further action to process your FAFSA.*

Make sure you applied for admission to colleges you listed on your FAFSA.

Colleges who receive your FAFSA results typically won't send you a financial aid package until you've applied and have been accepted to the school.

Watch for verification requests. The college(s) you listed on your FAFSA might request verification of your FAFSA information. If so, send the required documents to the colleges' financial aid office.

Watch for financial aid award notifications. The colleges you applied to – and listed on your FAFSA – will send you a financial aid award notification detailing the types and amounts of aid they're offering based on your financial need.

Winning the scholarship game

Follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

Don't ever pay for scholarship searches! Use free resources such as [ScholarshipQuest](#) at EducationQuest.org with over 2,000 Nebras-

ka-based scholarships. Free national sites include [Peterson's](#), [FindTuition](#), [Cappex](#), and [Chegg](#).

- **Visit your school counselor often** for information about local scholarships.
- **Focus on local and college-specific scholarships** because you're more likely to earn them.
- **Update your activities, honors, community service or paid jobs** using the [Activities Resume](#) at EducationQuest.org.

Earn the best possible ACT/SAT scores by taking the exam in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year.

Use quality references such as a teacher, coach or counselor. Encourage them to write specific examples of your leadership skills. Give them advance notice and a specific deadline.

Tailor your essay to the scholarship. Ask an English teacher to read your essay and offer advice on making a big impact. Your essay will need to stand out from other applications.

Want some inspiration? [Read](#) how one Nebraska student earned over \$65,000 in scholarships

December "To Do" List

Complete these tasks during December to stay on the right college planning track.

Seniors:

- ___ If you haven't already, submit [college applications](#) and the [FAFSA](#).
- ___ Continue to apply for scholarships.
- ___ Use our [College Timeline](#) to stay on track to college.

Juniors

- ___ Use our [College Timeline](#) to stay on track to college.
- ___ Take an ACT prep course.
- ___ Set up a [ScholarshipQuest](#) profile and start searching for Nebraska-based scholarships.

Cafeteria News

By Ms. Sandi

I have been cooking in the kitchen since Wendy's accident in October. I can't believe 2017 is soon going to be over and we will be starting a new year. Tis the season to plan on joining us for the Christmas Dinner on December 21st at 11:30 am.

Please RSVP by calling the office at 608-4434 by **December 14th** to reserve your lunch.

The next special meal date is January 31st for the Super Bowl meal.



PreK Lunch—12:00 noon
Elementary Lunch—11:30 a.m.
Middle/High School Lunch—12:25 p.m.



Julie has been volunteering her time one day a week for the last year and a half. She dedicates her time to supporting students with their reading and math skills.



Kindergarten and 1st grade are GRATEFUL for Alberta Olson and Julie Rasmussen. The students are always so excited to see them walk in. Thanks Alberta and Julie!

Jessica Mintken and Kyli Heiting



Mrs. Olson has volunteered her time to help the kindergarten and first grade classes during their computer class for the last couple years. She has also helped this year by the kindergarten and first grade classes in PE as well this year!

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Hay Springs Public Schools

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Hay Springs, NE 69347

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hshawks.com

Accredited by: Nebraska Department of Education

2017 – 2018 School Profile

Community and School

Hay Springs, Nebraska is a small rural community of about 600 people located in Northwestern Nebraska at the junction of US Route 20 and State Highway 87.

Hay Springs Public School is located on the northeast side of town. The school serves students from preschool through grade 12. Total enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is 188.

Hay Springs High School provides a full high school program including math, science, language arts, social studies, music, physical education, business, industrial technology, world languages, and special education. Dual credit classes are offered as well as the opportunity to access online college classes. Activities include athletics, band, choir, and drama.

Enrollment

Preschool	18
Elementary	86
Middle School	36
High School	<u>48</u>
Total	188

Academic Program

School year calendar: semesters

Block scheduling: No

Grading Scale: 4.0

Calendar:

Monday through Thursday

Preschool 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Or 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Elementary 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Middle Level 8:00 am – 4:15 pm

High School 8:00 am – 4:15 pm

Class Schedule:

Middle Level & High School

7 periods per day

64 minutes per period

Credits:

High School

5 credits for semester course

10 credits for year course

240 credits for graduation

GPA:

High School only; Unweighted

Grading Scale

A 93 - 100

B 85 – 92

C 78 – 84

D 70 – 77

F 0 – 69

Graduation Requirements

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credits</u>
English	40
Math	40
(including senior year)	
Science	30
Social Science	40
Phys Ed/Health	10
Fine Arts	10
Foreign Language	10
Career/Tech	20
Electives	<u>40</u>
Total	240

Post High School Information

2014 – 8 Graduates
63% attending college
2015 – 19 Graduates
84% attending college
2016 – 10 Graduates
60% attending college
20% joined military
2017 – 10 Graduates

ACT Scores

2016 – 17 students tested		
	Hay Springs	NEBRASKA
English	19.8	20.9
Math	19.8	20.9
Reading	19.6	21.9
Science	20.4	21.5
Composite	19.8	21.4

Nebraska State Assessment Data

Students are tested grade levels:

Grade				
3	Language	Math		
4	Language	Math		
5	Language	Math		Science
6	Language	Math		
7	Language	Math		
8	Language	Math		Science
11 (ACT)	Reading English	Math	Writing	Science

100% of students were tested at each grade and subject.

No students were exempted from NeSA assessments

Changes to the NeSA Assessments

Starting with the 2016-17 school year all third year high school students will take the ACT test, including the writing portion. There will no longer be a separate writing test at grades 4 and 8. The Reading test will be a Language Arts test that will include Reading and English.

Graduation Rate

Hay Springs High School	100%
Nebraska	89%

For more information see the Nebraska State of the Schools website:

<http://nep.education.ne.gov/Home/>

or for Hay Springs information:

<http://nep.education.ne.gov/Districts/Index/81-0003-000?DataYears=2015-2016>

December Lunch Menu 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Menus are subject to change without notice.					1	2
3 Breakfasts include cereals/cereal bars/yogurt/cheese sticks/fruits/juice/milk	4 Breakfast: Waffles/Pancakes Lunch: Mandarin Chicken	5 Breakfast: French Toast Casserole Lunch: Tacos	6 Breakfast: Egg & Sausage Casserole Lunch: Chicken & Noodle/Mashed Potato	7 Breakfast: Scrambled Eggs Lunch: Chili/Com Bread	8	9
10 Fruit and Veggie Bar is available each school day	11 Breakfast: Biscuit N Gravy Lunch: Ham Sandwich w/Cheese	12 Breakfast: Breakfast Burrito Lunch: Hamburger Pie	13 Breakfast: Pancake on a Stick Lunch: Variety of Soups	14 Breakfast: Sausage/Hash Browns Lunch: Meat Loaf/Cheesy Potato	15	16
17 PBJ/Pizza is available each school day	18 Breakfast: Egg & Sausage Biscuit Lunch: Beef N Cheddar Sandwich/Tater Tots	19 Breakfast: Easy Breakfast Casserole Lunch: Chicken Fajita	20 Breakfast: Egg & Ham Biscuit Lunch: Hamburgers	21 Breakfast: Cinnamon Roll Lunch: **Christmas Dinner ** Ham/Turkey/Potato/Strawberry Shortcake	22	23
24	25 Christmas Break - Jan. 2 nd MERRY CHRISTMAS	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					G/B BB vs Cody-Kilgore 3pm HS WR @ Custer SD, 2 day tourney 1	G/B BB @ Arthur County 1pm 2
		G/B BB @ Morrill 4 pm 4		HS WR Tri. @ Crawford 6	Baking Basics and Sewing Club 9-3 pm Santa Soup Cook-off 4-7:30, The Night, Lights & Music 7:30 pm 7	JH G/BB @ Crawford 10am HS WR @ G/R TBA G/B BB @ Mullen 2pm 9
		G/B BB @ Hemingford 2pm		JH G/BB vs. Morrill 5pm		G/B BB vs. McPherson County 3pm
	JH G/BB PANCO @ Morrill TBA 10	JR. Robotics mtg. 11	Health Professions Club 12	Preschool Family Night 13		HS WR @ Bridgeport 15
	HS Choir @ Pioneer Manor 10:15 am 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd Grade Christmas Concert 7pm 17	G/B BB vs. Oelrichs 3pm 18		Quarter 2 Ends 1,2,3 to Pioneer Manor 2pm X-MAS DINNER B/BB Holiday Tourney @ Sioux Cnty. 20	Christmas Break – Jan. 2 21	5 Day Sports Moratorium 23
Christmas Break all week 24	Christmas 25					
		Back to School G/B BB @ Bennett County 5:30 pm (Girls Only) 26				
	New Years 31	1	2	3	4	5
						6

DECEMBER

NOTES:

- Food Drive closes Dec. 13th
- Christmas Break from Dec. 25th
- Jan 1st
- Report cards available on Jan 8th



Parent & Child Activity Calendar

Hay Springs Public Schools



THE
PARENT
INSTITUTE®

Parent & Child Activity Calendar

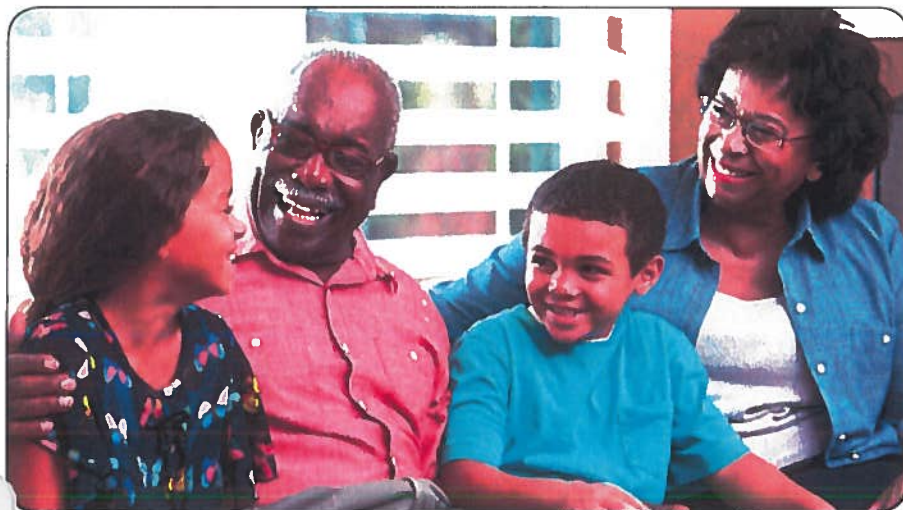
Elementary School
Parents
make the difference!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2017					1 Look online or in the newspaper for a list of seasonal events. Plan to attend one as a family this month.	2 Set aside time today to work on craft projects with your child. Perhaps he can give these as gifts.
3 Post a vocabulary word and its definition on the bathroom mirror. Change it every three or four days.	4 Talk with your child about a choice you've made and the consequence of that choice.	5 Read a news article with your child today.	6 Have your child name animals she loves. If she could choose one to have as a pet, which would it be? Why?	7 Holidays have you feeling hassled? Share the responsibility. As kids help, they appreciate holidays even more.	8 Plan a No TV evening. Read or play games as a family instead.	9 Have an indoor campout. Make a tent from a blanket. Eat s'mores and read stories.
10 Listen to a new kind of music with your child. Talk about how it makes each of you feel.	11 Have your child draw a picture while he is blindfolded. Direct him as he draws.	12 Many people celebrate holidays in December. What holidays can your child name? Talk about why they are special.	13 Give your child a small indoor plant to take care of. Put her in charge of the watering schedule.	14 What is the coldest place in the nation today? The warmest? What's the difference between the two temperatures?	15 Put a leafy stalk of celery into colored water. Watch the color rise into the stalk over the next week.	16 Bake cookies with your child. If you're doubling a recipe, have your child do the math.
17 Choose a number, then have your child list all the things he can think of that come in that number.	18 Talk about how animals survive the winter months. What do bears do? How about birds?	19 Recreate a tradition from your own childhood. Share it with your child.	20 Talk to your child about the importance of writing thank-you notes for gifts.	21 Tonight is the longest night of the year. Give everyone in the family a flashlight so they can read in bed.	22 Have a family sing-along. Ask family members to share their favorite songs.	23 Have your child replace the adjectives on a printed ad with their opposites.
24 Have your child write and mail a note to a friend.	25 Tell your child three things that you love about her. Have her tell you three things that she loves about you.	26 Take a walk with your child. Look for things you only see in December—holiday decorations and lights.	27 Talk about your child's favorite winter activity. Make plans to do it together.	28 Talk with your child about the very best present he ever received. What made it special?	29 Let your child invite a friend over. Pop popcorn or create ice cream sundaes.	30 Tell your child you love her.
31 Help your child create a time line of the last year.						

Elementary School Parents[®]

Hay Springs Public Schools

make the difference!



Keep learning alive for your child over the winter break

Your child looks at the calendar and imagines the joy of having free time for the whole winter school break. You look at the same blank squares on the calendar and have a mild moment of panic.

To keep from hearing “I’m bored” during your child’s time off from school, here are some activities that will keep her learning:

- **Make a list** of things your family can do together. With your child, look in the local paper or go online to find free events to attend and places to go. Are there museums in your area? Are there free concerts scheduled for this month? Does the public library have special story hours or performances?
- **Select a movie** that is based on a book. After you and your child finish

reading the book, watch the movie together. Discuss how the two are alike and how they are different.

- **Prepare food together.** Nearly every culture has some special foods associated with the holiday season. With your child, prepare foods you remember from your childhood. Share your memories. Or do some research and cook a dish you’ve never tried.
- **Encourage your child** to learn more about the past and your family history by talking with grandparents, aunts, uncles—even you. Help her come up with a list of questions to ask, such as, “What was school like for you when you were my age?” and “What trends were popular?” She can record the conversations, write them down, or just listen.

Does your child have the right tools for school?



A carpenter knows that he can’t do his best work without the proper tools for the task. That’s

a good way to think about how your child can do his best in school. He needs to show up with the right tools to do the job.

Here are a few essential ones:

- **Enough sleep.** A good night’s sleep is essential to your child’s health—and his success in school. Children between the ages of seven and 12 need 10 to 11 hours of sleep per day.
- **A healthy breakfast.** Cars can’t run without fuel, and kids’ brains are no different. Many studies show that children who eat breakfast do better in class, earning higher grades and test scores. They are better able to focus and have fewer behavior problems.
- **High expectations.** When you believe your child can do his best, he’ll believe it, too. So send him off with an “I know you can do it!” and he’ll have the confidence he needs to tackle another day.

Try word games to strengthen your child's writing skills



Using proper grammar takes practice. If your child struggles with forming and punctuating sentences, turn writing into a game.

Here are two fun activities to try:

1. **Fill-in-the-blank game.** Review the different parts of speech and write a story with missing words. For example: "The girl stepped on a ____ (*noun*).\" Take turns filling in the blanks. You can help by saying things like, \"A noun is a person, place or thing. I'll choose the word *pie*!\" Make the words as silly as you'd like. Then read the story aloud.
2. **Punctuation game.** Write a short story without punctuation. Then

read it together. It's challenging! This illustrates how important punctuation is for a sentence's clarity. Now edit the story, adding punctuation that makes it easy (or funny) to read. Suggest that your child write a story for you to punctuate. Discuss why you chose—or didn't choose—certain punctuation marks.

"The most difficult and complicated part of the writing process is the beginning."

—A.B. Yehoshua

To motivate your child, make sure expectations are realistic



Expectations can be tricky. Research shows that students generally live up to parent and teacher expectations,

whether the expectations are high or low. So, you want to set the bar high for your child.

But it's important to be realistic, too. Most students are not going to excel at everything. If you are only satisfied with near-perfection, your child may say to herself, "What's the point?" and stop trying altogether.

To make sure your expectations are realistic and effective:

- **Encourage your child to do her best in all her pursuits.**
- **Have unique expectations for each of your children.** Do not compare your child with her siblings, friends or classmates.

- **Let your child know you are proud of her effort and hard work.** Remind her that she should be proud of herself.
- **Remember that your expectations are for your child, not for you.** She is entitled to her own dreams. It is not fair to her if you simply want her to do what you wish you had done.
- **Learn about your child's interests.** When your child feels you value these, it can spur her to try to do better in all her pursuits.
- **Be a good role model.** Let your child see you give your best effort. Set expectations for yourself and talk to your child about how you plan to meet them.

Source: "Child Trends Databank: Parental Expectations for Their Children's Academic Attainment," Child Trends, nswc.com/elem_expectations.

Are you helping your child tackle that big project?



It's a fact of school life: The older the child, the bigger the project. Do you know how to support your child as he tackles a big

school project? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

- ___ 1. **Do you guide** your child if he needs to select a topic? Some students need help picking a topic they will understand.
- ___ 2. **Do you help** your child break down the project into lots of small steps? He can write each step on his homework calendar. As he finishes each step, he can cross it off.
- ___ 3. **Do you help** your child make a list of all the supplies he will need to avoid last-minute dashes to the store?
- ___ 4. **Do you take** your child to the library and encourage him to ask the librarian for resources that can help?
- ___ 5. **Do you review** your child's work, but avoid doing it for him?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you are taking positive steps to help your child succeed on the big school project. For *no* answers, try those ideas from the quiz.

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Improve your child's recall by making facts meaningful



Drilling your child over and over isn't the most effective way to help him remember new facts.

Instead, try connecting what he's studying to something meaningful.

Studies show that when new information is linked to something memorable, it's easier to retain. For instance, when your child is learning new words, his brain can digest the information in two ways: by repeating the sound of the word, or by focusing on its meaning. Although both approaches may work, emphasizing meaning leads to better overall recall.

To help your child absorb new facts:

- **Create a story.** He might struggle to remember the first three U.S. presidents, but what if you turned the information into a wild tale?

"One day, George Washington went to the park. He met John Adams by the swings. And later, the two bumped into Thomas Jefferson going down the slide." Suddenly, the presidents are put in a context he'll understand—and their order is laid out for him.

- **Focus on the bigger picture.** Rather than having him simply repeat the fact that "Jupiter is the largest planet," help your child tie it to something broader. "Everything about our solar system's biggest planet is big. Jupiter's 'big red spot' is even bigger than Earth." Small facts stick better when they are illustrated in a wider way.

Source: J.A. Meltzer and others, "Electrophysiological signatures of phonological and semantic maintenance in sentence repetition," *NeuroImage*, Elsevier, nismc.com/elem_meaningful.

Q: My husband is deployed overseas. He won't be here for the holidays. The longer he has been gone, the harder it has been on my third grader. Now my daughter's grades are starting to suffer. What advice do you have to help me get through a difficult holiday season and also get my child back on track?

Questions & Answers

A: Being separated from a parent is always hard. Having that parent be away during the holiday season can be even harder. Here are some ways to help:

- **Let your child know that it is OK** to miss her father. Say something like, "We love Daddy very much. Of course we're going to miss him. Whenever you feel sad, you can talk with me."
- **Talk to her teacher.** Be sure her teacher understands what she's going through and how she's feeling. Sometimes, a child feels she has to be brave at home but will confide in a teacher. Ask the teacher how you can help support your child so she gets her grades back on track.
- **Talk with your child about some fun holiday traditions** you want to continue—baking, decorating or watching a favorite holiday video. Even though the holidays won't be like every other year, they can still be a special time for you and your daughter.
- **Help your child stay in touch** with your husband as much as possible. Encourage him to call, send videos and email.
- **Look for ways you and your daughter can help others.** She may start to put her own problems in perspective when she sees that there are others who need help.

Expose your elementary schooler to other countries and cultures



Children don't always know much about other countries. Here are some ways you can expose your child to other cultures:

- **Learn about holiday customs** of people around the world. Use the library to discover how other people celebrate their special days.
- **Watch plays, movies or puppet shows** about people from other countries. Many libraries and museums present these programs for free.
- **Compare coins and stamps** from other countries. They often include information about the country. You may find stamps on mail from other countries at your workplace. You can also look online.
- **Learn simple words** in different languages. Teach your child to count to 10 in another language. Learn how to say *hello* and *thank you*.
- **Look for television programs** about other countries. When you watch the news, keep a globe or an atlas nearby to show your child the location of places mentioned.
- **Find a pen pal.** The best way for children to learn about other countries is for them to connect with kids from those places. Search online for free pen pal sites, such as www.studentsoftheworld.info.
- **Cook authentic recipes.** Pick a country and search online for a recipe to try. Prepare the dish with your child and enjoy it together!

It Matters: Building Character

Empathize with your child—up to a certain point



Is there such a thing as being too supportive when it comes to your child's negative emotions? Experts say yes.

According to research, parents who are overly sympathetic about their children's troubled feelings think their kids are more socially well-adjusted than others. Those same kids' teachers, however, rate them as being less well-adjusted than their peers.

Why the disconnect? It could be that when parents indulge every bad mood their child has, the child never stops to consider that there may be little justification for that mood.

This doesn't mean you should ignore your child's feelings. But rather than rush to agree every time she feels she's been wronged:

- **Ask for details.** If your child says a classmate was mean to her, find out more before jumping to her defense. Say, "Tell me what happened." This way, you're encouraging her to open up but not automatically agreeing that she's a victim.
- **Challenge her.** Your child may be upset that she performed poorly on a math quiz, but was that quiz really "unfair," as she claims? Press her a bit. "Why wasn't it fair?" If the real story is that she didn't study for it, then point that out. She wasn't mistreated; she was irresponsible. It's a hard—but vital—lesson to learn.

Source: V.L. Castro and others, "Changing tides: Mothers' supportive emotion socialization relates negatively to third-grade children's social adjustment in school," *Social Development*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., nlswc.com/elem_negative.

Helping others promotes confidence and self-esteem

Children want to feel like they play an important role in their community. Volunteering can help your child build important social skills and develop self-confidence—which will also benefit him in school.

Find a volunteer or community service activity you and your child can do together. Here are some ideas:

- **Bake something** for a senior citizen or a parent of a new baby.
- **Make sandwiches** for people who are homeless.
- **Help take care of a pet.** If a neighbor is going away for a few days, you and your child could offer to feed and walk the dog.
- **Take part in a clothing drive.** Collect coats, gloves and hats and donate them to local shelters.



- **Donate money he has earned.** It's nice when your child sees you give money to a charity. But he'll remember it longer if he gives away even a small sum of his own money to help others.

Talk to your child about the importance of honesty



Research shows that by the time children reach elementary school, most know the difference between being honest and lying. But that doesn't make telling the truth easy!

To encourage honesty:

- **Talk about it.** Ask your child if she believes that honesty is the best policy. Does she want others to tell her the truth? When does she think it's OK to lie?
- **Discuss the consequences** of lying. Lying destroys trust. If your child makes a habit of lying to people, they won't believe what she says—even when she is telling the truth!

- **Be a role model.** Children are good "lie detectors." They notice when parents tell the truth—and when they don't.
- **Create opportunities** for telling the truth. Say, "You broke my vase," instead of, "Did you do this?"
- **React calmly.** When your child lies, don't label her a "liar." Express confidence that she will make better choices in the future.
- **Reward trustworthiness.** If your child is truthful in a difficult situation, compliment her!

Source: McGill University, "The truth about lying? Children's perceptions get more nuanced with age," ScienceDaily, nlswc.com/elem_honesty.