

Welcome Back!

August 2024

Superintendent's News



Welcome back to school! Our school year always seems to start a little early with summer still in full swing but it is that time of year! Teachers and staff have been preparing for the new school year and are looking forward to seeing all of our students back in school!

We have added new staff to our Hawk family this year! We would like to welcome Mrs. Emilee Wells as our new Counselor. Mrs. Wells comes to us from Thedford Public Schools. In our Special Education Department we are adding Mrs. Catherine Deines who comes from Hemingford. In 2nd grade we are adding Ms. Ashton Hughes, who comes from Wolf Creek. Joining the elementary school in the 5th grade, Ms. Jessica Whetham comes from Crawford Schools. We are very pleased to be joined by these skilled professionals. Please stop in and introduce yourself if you get a chance.

We will be receiving our new electric bus within the next week. We will be using the bus as a route bus daily and may use it for short activity trips. As you remember, Hay Springs Schools received a grant from the EPA back in the fall of 2022 to purchase this bus. We are looking forward to adding this bus to our small fleet to help provide safe transportation for our students.

This summer teachers received training in both Math and Social Studies. The district purchased new textbooks and curriculum for our school. Mrs. Digmann and our teachers will continue to work hard to implement

these new curriculums for our students. I look forward to another successful year both academically and in our activities and athletic teams. We have wonderful teachers, coaches and parents, but most importantly students. It is such a pleasure to work with every level and see the excitement when our students discover something new and have new breakthroughs. Please come in if you have any questions, we would love to hear from you. Thank you for your support of Hay Springs Schools. We look forward to seeing you all throughout the year.

BACK TO SCHOOL



Principal's Scoop

By Mr.s. Digmann



Welcome Back! I hope you all had a wonderful, relaxing, fun-filled summer break. I am excited to be back in the office. I took 3 weeks off this summer and had a great time with my family and our exchange daughter who was here visiting from Germany.

I love the excitement of this time of year! Whether students admit it or not they are also excited to be back. It is always fun to see the students walk through the door and meet up with their friends, some they haven't seen all summer. There is a buzz in the air that is unmatched.

Everyone has been busy at school getting ready for the upcoming school year. The custodians have been working hard to get things cleaned and ready to go. Several staff members have changed classrooms, so there is a lot of moving and shaking going on. We have also had a lot of staff here for training this summer - we have new math and social studies curriculums as well as the "8 to Great" curriculum for 1st, 7th and 11th grade students.

I also just wanted to share that this year the elementary staff has chosen to not have a back to school night at the beginning of the year, but are wanting to have a family night in September so they can show parents the new curriculum and be able to show what the students have been learning. We will be sending out more information about this as it gets closer.

GO HAWKS!

Attendance Changes

There will be a few changes made to the attendance codes this year. In order to better track truancy and chronic absenteeism, HSPS has changed and streamlined the attendance codes. In years past there were 17 different codes to excuse students from school, moving forward there will only be the 8 as follows:

ACT: Activity

MED: medical excused - students who return with a doctor note for an appt.

D: Discretionary - funerals, quarantine, court, etc.

* These codes mean your student is excused from school, and attendance is not included in truancy.

PEX: Parent excused - anytime a parent calls to excuse a student without a medical note.

UNK: Unknown-Unable to Verify - no call/ no show

* These codes are reported for truancy in accordance with the truancy laws.

ISS: In-School Suspension

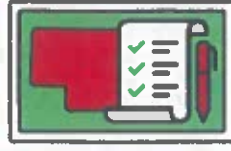
OSS: Out of School Suspension

EXP: Expulsion

* Discipline Codes

School attendance is reported to the state annually and becomes part of a school and district's rating. "Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% of a child's time in membership. It counts all absences: excused, unexcused, and suspensions. Most importantly, chronic absence emphasizes the academic impact of the missed days" (Nebraska Department of Education). While the school understands that some absences are unavoidable, and students who are ill should stay home, being at school is very important to a student's success.

For more information please see the 24-25 student handbook Section 4: Attendance or Nebraska Statute 79-201 on attendance. Please feel free to contact administration with any questions.



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Why absenteeism matters:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2 to 4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Absenteeism and its ill effects start early. One in 10 kindergarten and first grade students are chronically absent.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or are held back.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absence.
- Students who live in communities with high levels of poverty are four times more likely to be chronically absent than others, often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and a lack of access to healthcare.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.



THE 8 to Great

* road map to success!

--- HIGH-WAYS ---

1

GET THE PICTURE

Visualize the end result.
Think it 'til you feel it.

2

RISK

Ask yourself, "If FEAR was not a factor..."
and RUN TO, *not from*.

3

FULL RESPONSIBILITY

Move from Blaming and Complaining
to ACTING and DREAMING.

4

FEEL ALL YOUR FEELINGS

To heal, allow both
MAD (*Angergy*) and SAD (*Release*).



5

HONEST COMMUNICATION

ASK for what you want and
LISTEN from the heart.

6

FORGIVENESS OF THE PAST

We were all doing the best we could
with the information we had.

7

GRATITUDE FOR THE PRESENT

Three things you're grateful for each day,
NO REPEATS.

8

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Don't give up. The road to success
is never a straight line.

*Hope is what happens when
you have a process.*

New Faces at HSPS

I want to take this opportunity to welcome our new staff members to our Hay Springs community and particular to our Hay Springs educational system.



I am Ms. Ashton and I am looking forward to being the second grade teacher. This school year will be my tenth year as an elementary teacher. I have taught first and second grade throughout my career. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education in 2015 at Chadron State College. I am very excited to be a teacher here at Hay Springs Public Schools. I have lived my entire life in Hay Springs and I have always wanted to be a part of this school district.

Outside of school, I enjoy doing various things with my son Bryson. We enjoy being outside whether it is riding our bikes, playing at the park, going swimming or playing about every sport possible.



My name is Jessica Whetham and I am beginning my journey as Hay Springs's new 5th grade teacher. This will be my fourth year of teaching but my first year of teaching elementary. I am looking forward to this new adventure! My previous three years were spent teaching 7th/8th grade math, reading and language arts. Throughout my college education and teaching experience, I have worked with a wide range of students and age groups in various classroom settings. Fifth grade has been my favorite, so I am excited to begin this journey as a Hawk!

I am originally from Chadron but spent the latter part of my childhood in Greybull, Wyoming, so I consider both places home. I attended college in Casper for three years, then transferred to Chadron State College to complete my teaching degree. I currently live in Chadron with my dog Blue. In my free time, I enjoy reading, fishing; and spending time with family playing card games.

I am excited to begin my journey as a Hawk and look forward to being part of such an incredible and supportive community and school.

New Faces at HSPS

My name is Catie Deines and I am so excited to be back in the Hay Springs community and school. I will be starting my third year teaching Special Education. I was previously at Hemingford for 2 years where I taught 5-8 grade Special Education. Throughout college, I spent 4 years here in Hay Springs coaching and student teaching and am so excited to be a Hawk again.

I am originally from Plainview, Nebraska and came to Chadron for college in 2017. I got married in 2022 to my husband Colin and we reside in Chadron. We have a little girl, Novah, who is almost one and is so much fun. In my free time I enjoy being with family and going on adventures with my daughter. I am so glad to be here in Hay Springs and can't wait to see what my time here will bring!



Meet the school counselor!



Mrs. Emilee Wells

all about me:

I grew up in Gordon, but have lived in Thedford for the past 6 years. Serving as a school counselor is one of my life's greatest joys and this is my 4th year in the profession. I love spending my free time with my husband, son, and our dogs Duke and Lilly.

how can i help?

I am here to support all of the wonderful students here at Hay Springs and their families! I will provide classroom guidance lessons, individual counseling, small group counseling, consultation services, 504 coordination, and plan special events for our students. If you would like support for your child's social-emotional needs, please don't hesitate to reach out to me anytime – I'm here to help you!



let's connect!



(308) 638-4434



emileewells@hshawks.com

Cafeteria News

By Ms. Laura

Welcome Back! Here in the lunchroom, we are excited to bring a few new recipes into our menu this year! We are still offering the chef salads as an alternate all week, and either PB&J sandwiches on Monday and Wednesday or a Deli Sandwich (either turkey or ham) on Tuesdays and Thursdays in case you don't like the main meal that day. These sandwiches or salad only replace the main entrée, so you can still enjoy our salad bar and all the great sides that we offer each day!

To better serve the students, we are asking that parents fill out the Accommodation Forms that were mailed out to let us know about allergies and/or medical needs. Even if your student doesn't normally eat lunch with us, please fill a form out if your student has special food needs (ex: peanut, chocolate, or gluten allergies) because it will be good to have on file for the teachers when they plan holiday parties! We also have the Free and Reduced Lunch form even if you don't think that you would qualify, please take the time to fill out and return the form (because you never know!)

Please make sure that your EZPay School Lunch Account has an acceptable balance for your student. You can pay through the school office or online and can set yourself up for balance alerts so that you never go below a certain amount. Once an account goes into the negative, seconds will no longer be allowed. Even if you qualify for free or reduced meals, things like seconds, a la carte items, and snack milks are still charged to your student's account as they don't count as complete meals. Please help us to make sure your student meets their nutritional needs by keeping a balance in their lunch accounts!

We are looking forward to a great year – see you in the lunchroom Hawks!

Kelly and Laura



IMPORTANT DATES

- Wednesday, August 7th ~ **1st Day of School** (1/2 day, dismissal at 12:05) NO PM Preschool
 - Thursday, August 8th ~ **Full day for Everyone**
- Thursday, August 8th ~ Mandatory Parent/Student Meeting and Concussion Awareness, 6 p.m. in the auditorium
 - Monday, August 12th ~ **Start of Fall Practice**
 - Thursday, August 15th ~ **Grill-N-Grid** 6pm
 - Thursday, August 22-25th ~ **Friendly Festival**
- Friday, August 30th ~ HS VB home vs. Oelrichs 4pm/HS FB home vs. Paxton 6pm
 - NO SCHOOL ~ Monday, September 2nd



HOMEcoming IS SET TO TAKE PLACE THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 23rd–28th STAY TUNED FOR

DETAILS!



Watch the Announcements and Website to stay up to date on any changes!

FREE OR REDUCED COST MEALS ELIGIBILITY AND MEAL CHARGES

The district shall comply with all state and federal laws applying to providing free and reduced meals under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and other related federal grant programs.

Free or Reduced Meals Eligibility

Families of students enrolled in the district who wish to qualify for free or reduced price meals may submit an application on or after July 1 for the current school year. If the financial situation of a household changes during the school year, they may submit a new application to become eligible. Applications are available at the Central Administrative Office of the school building.

Meal Charges

The written meal charge policy and guidelines shall be in place before the beginning of each school year and parents shall be advised of the available payment systems and meal prices. The district will encourage pre-payment of meal balances but the district must include a method for adding funds during the school day such as cash payments at the school office. A qualifying student with money to purchase a reduced price meal must be provided the meal; the district may not use that money for previously unpaid charges if the student intended to buy a meal that day.

Students who owe over \$20 dollars are given a meal but they are not allowed to charge any seconds or extra drinks to their account. The salad bar is all-you-can-eat so they are allowed to get that if they are still hungry. Students who have a negative balance can pay \$1.00 to get a second. That is entered as a paid item and not charged to their account.

All balances remaining in accounts shall carry over to the next month. Balances of households qualifying for free or reduced meals with funds remaining in the account at the end of the school year shall receive a refund. The district shall attempt to contact the household of all students transferring out or graduating from the district to return any unused funds remaining in the student's account. The district may set varying meal charge guidelines for students of different grade levels including charges relating to alternate meals, ala carte items and limits on charges that a parent may set for a student's daily lunch expenditures.

The district must set written guidelines regarding the collection of delinquent meal charges such as the amount of delinquent meal charges which initiate an established collection process, providing notice to households of those students and carrying out appropriate follow-up. Unpaid meal charges are classified as "delinquent debt" and remain on the food service accounting documents until they are collected or written off as uncollectible.

Guidelines must also cover how the district will handle situations where children eligible for reduced price meals do not have money in their accounts to cover the cost of their meal at the time of service. Households must be notified of all payment methods used by

the district, including any fees. At least one payment method must be free of charge. The district cannot solely require the use of an online payment system; another option must be available.

Approved March 11 2024 Reviewed G.C. March 2024 Revised March 11, 2024

Confidentiality

The information provided by families on the free and reduced price application will be used only for determining eligibility for meal or milk benefits and verification of eligibility. Only staff members and organizations carrying out the activities of the School Lunch Act shall have access to this information.

The district should use methods of lunch payment systems such as pre-payment to avoid openly identifying children who qualify for free or reduced meals. Meal cards, tickets, tokens or other methods of payment must not be coded or colored to identify such status.

Policy Communication

This policy will be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the district during the school year.

This policy will also be provided annually to all district staff responsible for enforcing the policy including food service professionals. Staff members such as counselors, school nurses, homeless liaisons, and others assisting students in need should also be informed of the policy.

The district will maintain documentation of the annual distribution of this policy.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 et seq.
7 C.F.R. §§ 210 et seq.
USDA Unpaid Meal Charges, SP 46-2016, 47-2016 and 57-2016.

Cross Reference: 504.19 Student Fees

AUGUST 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	31	30	31
<p>NOTES: Choice of 1% White Milk, Skim Chocolate or Skim Strawberry Milk served daily. Alternate Lunch choices are PBJ(Mon, Wed), Deli Sandwich(Tue, Thur), Chef Salad(includes a bread) is available Daily. Alternate choices only replace the Main Entree, all sides can still be chosen. Menu subject to change without notice.</p>						



Hay Springs School Cafeteria.
 Breakfast is always served with choice of Fruit, Yogurt and Granola.
 Lunch salad bar is served with a mixed lettuce salad, 2 Fruits, and 3 Other items that change daily.

2024-2025 FACULTY AND STAFF LIST

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

George Clear	Superintendent
Tera Digmann	Pk-12 Prinicipal, Curriculum
Staci Wolken	Business Manager
Adriene Kelly	Administrative & AD Secretary
Emilee Wells	Pk-12 Counselor
Nichole Marcy	Activities Director, 7-8 ELA
Kim Marx	Special Education Director, Assessment, 6-9 Science
Larel Reimann	Technology Director

CERTIFIED TEACHING STAFF

Rachel Rasmussen	Early Childhood/ Preschool
Sammy Meeks	Kindergarten
Kyli Helting	1st Grade
Ashton Hughes	2nd Grade
Emma Strotheide	3rd Grade
Jessica Mintken	4th Grade
Jessica Whetham	5th Grade
Kayla Orr	Title, Library, K-3 Library/ Computers
Raime Varvel	Pk-12 Music, Band
Rachel Mandelko	Pk-12 Physical Education
Jessie Anderson	Middle Level Math, Algebra I
Jodie Garrett	Reading 6, English 6, Social Studies 6, K-3 & 6-7 Art, Title/ Interventions
Brad Bounous	7-12 Social Studies
Frankie Johnson	9-12 English, Journalism
Kodi Young	Geometry, Algebra II, Math IV, Biology, Earth Science, Physics
Trevor Ginkens	Ag, Welding
Jason Badje	Woods, Construction
Melissa Sommerville	HS Computers/Business, K-3 Computers
Catherine Deines	Special Education

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Laura Leander	
Mindie Starke	HS Art, SPED
Cara McKillip	2nd Grade
Jake Lemmon	One-to-one

CAFETERIA STAFF

Kelly Richardson	Assistant Food Manager
	Head Cook, Food Manager

CUSTODIAL STAFF / MAINTENANCE

Ricky Wohl	Head Custodian, Head Maintenance
Nate Cochran	Custodian, Maintenance
Tracy Eitler	Custodian

TRANSPORTATION

Ricky Wohl	Transportation Supervisor, Activity Bus Driver
Brett Skinner	Activity Bus Driver
Sandi Abbott	Bus Route Driver

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Greg Heiting	President, Finance, Building, Grounds & Transportation
Justin Anderson	Vice President, Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction
David Russel	Secretary, Finance, Building, Grounds & Transportation
Miriam Kearns	Treasurer, Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction, Building, Grounds & Transportation, Lister-Sage
Katie Stock	Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction, Lister-Sage
Jim Varvel	Finance

Hay Springs Public Schools 2024-25 School Calendar

August 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- Friday – No school for students
- School Closed
- PD Professional Development (No school for students)
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- First day of school/semester
- Last day of semester
- End of quarter
- Graduation

Q1: 10/10 – 37 days Q3: 3/13 – 40 days
 Q2: 12/19 – 38 days Q4: 5/22 – 38 days
 S1: 12/19 – 75 days S2: 5/22 – 78 days

- Aug. 7 - First day of school, 1/2 day
- Sep. 2 - Labor Day
- Oct. 3 - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Oct. 10 - End of 1st Quarter
- Nov. 27, 28 - Thanksgiving
- Dec. 19 - End of Quarter/Semester, 1/2 day
- Dec. 23 to Jan. 2 - Christmas Break
- Jan. 6 - First day of 2nd Semester
- Feb. 17 - No School/Teacher In-service
- Mar. 6 - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Mar. 13 - End of 3rd Quarter
- Apr. 21 - No School
- May 10 - Graduation
- May 22 - End of Quarter/Semester, 1/2 day
- May 23 - Teacher's last day

2024-25 FEES/PRICE LIST

ADMISSION PRICES AND PARTICIPATION FEES

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Varsity Events					
Adult	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Senior Citizen	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Student (K-12)	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Pre-Kindergarten	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
JV or Jr. High Events					
Adult	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Senior Citizen	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Student (K-12)	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Pre-Kindergarten	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
Passes -Family Pass includes: Parents and students 0-12th grades residing in the same household.					
Family Pass	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Adult Pass	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Student Pass (K-12)	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Senior Citizen				\$30.00	\$30.00
Participation Fees (includes free admission to home activities)					
High School	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00
Middle School	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00
LUNCH PRICES					
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Hot Lunch Meal					
Adult	\$3.65	\$3.65	\$3.65	\$4.60	\$5.00
6 th – 12 th Grades	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.50
PK-5 th Grades	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$3.00
Breakfast PK-12th Grades					
Adult	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75
	\$1.50	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$2.75	\$2.75
Seconds/Extras					
Main Dish	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Dessert	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Milk	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
OTHER FEES					
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Elementary Supplies		\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
Copies					
Black & White		\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Color Copies		\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Lamination					
Any width		\$2.00/linear foot			



Sign up for important updates from HSPS and HSPS.

Get information for Hay Springs Elementary School right on your phone—not on handouts.

Pick a way to receive messages for **Hawk Parent/Student Notices**:

A If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/hawkpar

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.



B If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @hawkpar to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @hawkpar to (757) 337-4602.

** Standard text message rates apply.*



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/hawkpar on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.



Certificate of Accreditation

The Nebraska Department of Education

Recognizes

Hay Springs Public Schools

AS AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025

BY THE OFFICIAL ACTION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION


Dr. Brian L. Maher

Commissioner of Education



Deborah A. Frison, Ed.D.
Deputy Commissioner of Education

Elementary School Parents[®]

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Hay Springs Public Schools

make the difference!



Make attendance a priority for your child this school year

As students gear up for another school year, the lingering effects of COVID-19 continue to impact attendance—with rates still struggling to reach pre-pandemic levels. Over seven million students across the U.S. are missing out on three weeks or more of valuable class time annually.

Poor attendance damages academic success. When students miss school or arrive in class late, everyone suffers. Teachers spend time collecting makeup work and reteaching. Meanwhile, other students—who are ready to learn—must wait.

Teach your child that a student's number one responsibility is to start school on time every day. To support your child:

- **Stick to a schedule.** Establish evening and morning routines that help your child be prepared. Select outfits and gather materials needed for school at night.
- **Schedule carefully.** Make medical and other appointments during non-school hours when possible. School should be a priority when planning family trips, too.
- **Seek help when needed.** Many factors contribute to missing school. If your family struggles with health, transportation, work, child care or other issues, talk with school staff. Our shared goal is to help all students do their best in school.

Source: P.W. Jordan and R. Miller, *Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism under the Every Student Succeeds Act*, FutureEd.

Improve school performance with breakfast



It takes a lot of energy for students to concentrate in class. So it's no surprise that kids

who start the school day without breakfast often lack focus.

Studies consistently show that breakfast affects how well children do in school. One study looked at how breakfast affected students' attendance and academic performance. They found that children who ate breakfast had:

- **Better attendance.**
- **Fewer episodes of tardiness.**
- **Higher math scores.**
- **Improved concentration, alertness, comprehension, memory and learning.**

Whether your elementary schooler eats breakfast at home or at school, try to have a few healthy grab-and-go options available. An apple and a piece of cheese will get your child off to a good start. So will a whole-grain bagel and cream cheese. In a pinch, even a piece of last night's pizza will do!

Source: K. Baildon, "Breakfast and the Brain: How Eating Breakfast Impacts School Performance," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Navigating social challenges leads to increased confidence



When adults are overly involved in children's social lives, kids can't develop the confidence and resilience they need

to thrive. Swooping in and saving your child from every social challenge won't help in the long run—and it might actually hurt your child.

Your elementary schooler is more likely to establish healthy friendships and feel more confident when prepared with social skills. And these skills won't just help your child navigate the playground successfully. They'll make your child feel more confident in the classroom, too.

To strengthen social skills:

- **Empower your child to take action.** Listen closely when your child comes to you with a problem.

Say, "That sounds frustrating. What did you do next?" Then, give your child a chance to think of a solution. Sometimes, all kids need is someone to listen to them.

- **Model resilience.** Talk about your own social struggles and how you faced them. When children hear stories about how family members overcame obstacles, they become more resilient in the face of challenges.
- **Teach your child to be assertive.** Show your child how to speak up. Ask your child to make a strong case for why you should grant requests for desired items or activities. Or, have a family debate night. When children are encouraged to speak up at home, they find their voice at school and in the world.

Make your family read-aloud time a success with these tips



Some families stop reading aloud together as soon as their children learn to read. But reading aloud can continue to be

fun, and it builds reading skills, too.

To make your read-aloud time successful:

- **Do it every day.** When you read aloud with your child daily, you demonstrate that reading time is much too important to miss.
- **Pick a regular time.** When reading is already part of your daily routine, you won't have to think about trying to fit it into a hectic day. Choose a time when your child will be most receptive, such as after playing outside or before bed.
- **Read the book first**—before you read it aloud. Reading aloud is

performing. You'll do a better job if you're familiar with what you're going to read. Previewing a book may also keep you from getting bogged down in a book that neither you nor your child enjoys.

- **Read books you like.** If you like a book, odds are your child will, too. Start by reading books you enjoyed as a child. Often, your enjoyment will be contagious!
- **Emphasize the first line.** The first line of any great story will grab the reader's attention.
- **Use facial expressions.** Widen your eyes to show surprise. Squint a bit to show you're thinking.
- **Leave your child wanting more.** Stop your day's reading at a point where you are both eager to hear what happens next.

Q: Last year, my child put off a large project until the very last minute. Trying to get finished on time stressed out our child and our entire family. What can we do to make sure this year is different?

Questions & Answers

A: Long-term projects teach students—and sometimes families—valuable lessons. Last year, you learned what *not* to do.

Your child is obviously a person who understands deadlines. So this year, help your elementary schooler set *a lot* of deadlines before the project is actually due.

Encourage your child to:

1. **Select a topic early.** The sooner your child has a topic, the sooner the work can begin.
2. **Make a list of all the steps** that must be taken to complete the project. Your child should include the trip to the store for supplies and the time it will take to assemble everything. Suggest building in at least two days for unexpected issues that often seem to happen.
3. **Set a deadline** for each part of the project. Make sure your child knows the consequence for missing a deadline. (If your child hasn't completed the work, for example, there certainly isn't time for recreational screen time.)
4. **Post the list of deadlines** in a place where you'll both see it every day. Then, after achieving each step, your child can cross off that deadline.

By following these steps, your child will not only learn from a long-term project, but will also develop valuable time management skills. Best of luck for a successful school year!