

Staff Commendations

November 2025

I would like to commend my entire gray pod team at the middle school: Stacy Heidemann, Brynn Hansen, Kylie Merical, Austin Rix, Tom Clark, and Amanda Christiansen. I am new to working in the gray pod this year, and all of them have been very helpful in getting me acclimated! We have had great collaborative discussions to support the students. I am very fortunate to be part of this team!

-Holly Foarde

To Anne Frett, Eric Mohlis, Sarah Bosen, Lisa Maifeld, Avery Nabholz, and Jeff Wolfe: Thank you for collaborating with the Curriculum Department to bring a live musical performance experience to our district's fourth graders. From teaching students about the elements of musicals to preparing sets, rehearsals, costumes, and coordinating district-wide transportation — it truly takes a village. We are so grateful for your teamwork and dedication in making this meaningful experience possible for our students.

-Shana and Ashton

I would like to send a commendation to Julie Koch. Julie recently stepped into a role at dismissal time that takes a bit of time to learn. Julie has learned this role quickly and is an integral part of the dismissal process ensuring kids are released from school in an efficient and safe manner!

-Amy Maxfield

I would like to recognize Sarah Schock. What she accomplishes throughout her day is immense and vital to keeping the ship afloat. Yet, she still makes time to discuss and assist me with attendance work. I greatly appreciate her knowledge, dedication, and friendship!

-Brandon Fitch

I would like to recognize April Heitland, Cory Stratton, and Adam Jones for their dedication to the kids at NR. When kids are struggling they provide the calm comfort our students need. They are able to provide this while still communicating the expectations.

-Brandon Fitch

I would like to recognize Jenny Rantz. She is so impressive, her ability to intertwine no nonsense expectations with love is remarkable. She truly is an asset for the SP building.

-Brandon Fitch

I would like to recognize my fellow NR Encore team (Betsy Bejarno, Sarah Bosen, Amanda Erps, Adam Jones, and Kellen Sulentic) for their dedication to students and solutions. They are so amazing to work with and are so very collaborative.

-Brandon Fitch

I would like to recognize Logan Wilson. She is so intelligent, dedicated to her work, and a solution finder. The manner in which she builds relationships is admirable as well. She does so much for SP and I hope she knows how much we all appreciate her.

-Brandon Fitch

I would like to recognize April Heitland for her assistance and support with my professional goals. Her knowledge and intelligence supports her ability to view connections between work we are doing as a building/district and the work Adam Jones and I are doing for our counseling program. She is also quick to recognize and acknowledge NR staff members for even the littlest of things she notices with her words or a personalized note.

-Brandon Fitch

I'd like to recognize Amy Cory for the creative work she does as our art teacher. Her creativity, patience, and enthusiasm make the art room a place where every student feels seen and inspired. Our halls are decorated with art work that always catches my eye. She has made a particularly meaningful impact on my daughter. Through her kindness and encouragement, my daughter has discovered a love for art and a confidence in expressing herself through her creations.

-Brittany Halsrud

A huge thank you goes out to Molly Kremer, Megan Kimrey, Kendra Shuckahosee, Kari Kinnick, Austin Rix, and Stacy Heidemann for opening up your classrooms and welcoming a group of visiting teachers from another district to see your amazing MyView Literacy lessons in action! We were all impressed to see creative student engagement ideas and how you are implementing MyView so well! It takes a high level of vulnerability and courage to do this, especially with something so new, and it's much appreciated!!

-Tyra Behnkendorf & Shana Olson

Thanks to Greg Davis for being such a positive part of our kindergarten student's day. He has unlimited patience and a huge desire to help our friend have the most amazing days at school. You are so appreciated!

-Jenny Rants

Thanks to Flora Khosravi for always being consistent and following through with student expectations day in and day out. She is an important part of the special education team at South Prairie.

-Jenny Rants

I would like to recognize Jolisa Spann for putting on our Veteran's Day Assembly! She works so hard for our Oak View Student Council and they do such a great job of getting our school to recognize and honor our Veterans! It is a special day!

-Sarah Rose

I would like to recognize Katie Horrigan for her outstanding dedication and impact as a paraprofessional. Katie consistently goes above and beyond to support her students—building strong, trusting relationships and helping each child feel seen, valued, and capable of success. Her patience, compassion, and positive attitude create a calm and encouraging environment where students can thrive both academically and socially. She takes initiative to meet students' individual needs, provides thoughtful academic and behavioral support, and works collaboratively with teachers to ensure every student has the tools they need to succeed. The difference Katie makes in our school and in our students' lives is truly remarkable. Her hard work and care have helped students gain confidence, independence, and a love for learning. We are so grateful for her commitment, professionalism, and the heart she brings to her work each day.

-Joanna Hammond

I would like to recognize Preston Ward. He starts every day with a warm greeting to all the students and is a positive person for them to see first thing in the morning!

-Sam Peters

I would like to recognize Jack Vanderflught, the high school Rho Kappa Chapter Sponsor, for the meaningful Veterans' Day Assembly held on November 11. Again this year Mr. Vanderflught and the Rho Kappa students demonstrated professionalism and organizational skill in planning and hosting this event. The assembly was thoughtful, respectful, and highlighted our school's commitment to citizenship and community involvement. Thank you to Mr. Vanderflught and the Rho Kappa students for the opportunity to honor our veterans.

-Sandi Ellis

I would like to recognize Brittany Halsrud and Cara Piepho for their thoughtful and intentional collaboration to support student health at DCE!

-Mallory DeLacy

I would like to recognize Aimee Munson for her willingness to jump in and provide support where she sees a need. She goes above and beyond her normal job responsibilities every day, and her positive attitude is contagious. We are so lucky to have her on the DCE team!

-Mallory DeLacy

Jordan Paup, you have been such a great addition to our Heritage staff! Your unwavering support for students and staff is commendable! I love that you are willing to dig in, problem solve using data, and create success with well-written plans.

-Diann Williamson

Thank you, Whitney Boaz, for bringing your positive energy to work each day! I am especially glad you are getting the opportunity to mentor a teacher to be a great educator like you.

-Diann Williamson

Thank you, Heather Roberts, for being such a hard worker! You set up and take down the Book Fair each year without complaint. I know this takes extra time out of your schedule to offer this great experience to our students.

-Diann Williamson

Amy Maxfield, you are a woman with many talents! I appreciate how you are always willing to do whatever needs to be done to make sure the day runs smoothly - recess duty, covering the nurse's office, lunch duty, cleaning the break room, and so much more. THANK YOU!

-Diann Williamson

Joel Eiteman, you are one of the hardest working people I know! You are always busy making sure things are in tip top shape around the building. Thank you for responding to work requests quickly. You are GREATLY appreciated!

-Diann Williamson

I would like to recognize our 5th grade teachers: Amanda Christiansen, Tom Clark, Kim Flynn, Trisha Gurnsey, Brynn Hansen, Stacy Heidemann, Jacob Heinemann, Barb Kellner, Kylie Merical, Michaela Peters, and Austin Rix. Each of our 5th grade PLCs have collaborated around student achievement and engagement. By using our student spotlight process, they have pooled their knowledge to generate instructional strategies to utilize with students. They are truly reflective and committed to supporting all students. Thank you for your collaboration and keeping students at the heart of your work!

-Katie Johnston

Danell Duncan has done so much work this term for the fine arts department at the high school. She designed and organized band and Wizard of Oz t-shirt orders. She took pictures, created and hung senior band posters, and is currently taking pictures for the speech poster. She is also working with the city of Grimes on a mural project. On top of this, she runs an art club and the prom committee!

-April Busch

Thank you to Rochelle Biegger, Jayna Gossling, and Brittany Mendlik for the time and planning they put into the Ellis Island simulation. It was a real life experience that made the students experience something on a different level.

-April Heitland

Thank you to Emma Hartman, Chloe Nixon, and Sam Stumberg for their thoughtful collaboration to ensure all of our students learn at high levels. The 1st grade team focuses on the right work and makes sure they have instruction and assessments that guide their work.

-April Heitland

Thank you to Ann Mensing and Rebecca Skow for their innovative ways they look to engage our students in learning. They are constantly collaborating and using data to guide their decisions. They put the needs of our students at the front of their discussions.

-April Heitland

Thank you to Adam Jones and Brandon Fitch for their continued work with MTSS-B and ASCA RAMP work at North Ridge. They are thoughtful and intentional with planning and implementation.

-April Heitland

Thank you to Nurse Steph for her support and communication with all of our students and their health needs. She goes above and beyond to make sure students' needs are being met.

-April Heitland