



Dallas Center-Grimes
Community School District
High School

2555 West 1st St. Suite 200 Grimes, IA 50111

Phone: 515-986-9747

Fax: 515-986-9773

November 2025
DCGCSD School Board Report
Prepared by: Matthew J. Blackmore, High School, Principal

December **Welcome | Principal Matthew Blackmore**

As the snow starts to fall, teaching and learning are heating up at DCG!

Our faculty is enjoying dedicated time to see their colleagues in action this school year!

As we continue to build our collective efficacy and reinforce our "all means all" culture, we are thrilled to have staff participate in Learning Walks!

What is a Learning Walk?

A Learning Walk is a brief, non-evaluative activity designed for staff to observe and celebrate the great things happening in our classrooms. It's an opportunity to see our district core values—innovation, support, collaboration, inclusive, and passion—in action.

How the Learning Walks Will Work

Staff members will visit other colleagues' classes during their PLAN PERIOD. Here's what staff will see & do:

- Teams: Staff will walk in pairs or triads.
- Focus: Each short walk (approximately 5 minutes) will be focused on looking for and documenting our core values within classes.
- Observation: Feel free to move around the room (if appropriate) to see what students are doing, talk briefly with them, and observe the classroom environment (desks, walls, board).
- Comments: The goal is to record observations—*what we see/hear*—and not to suggest what "we would do."

The central question is: Where do we see/hear our core values in the classroom?

Celebration and Purpose

Learning Walks are a dedicated time to celebrate our profession and the academic growth of our students. It is critical to note that these walks are in no way shape or form evaluative or judgmental. They are purely observational and celebratory.

Go Mustangs!

Matthew J. Blackmore
High School Principal

Safety Update 🚒 | Doors & Access

As part of our ongoing efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment for our students and staff, we are updating our building access procedures.

Beginning Monday, December 1st **the following entrances will be unlocked for school access until 8:15:**

- **Main Entrance**
- **Meadows Entrance**
- **Meadows Entrance (Facing Bus Concourse)**

All other exterior doors will remain locked at all times.

This adjustment helps ensure that visitors enter through monitored locations and reduces the number of unsecured access points before and after school. Please continue to remind students not to open doors for anyone, prop doors open and direct all visitors to the main entrance.

DCG & OPN Architects 🏠 | Update

- Project Schedule: While there is so much going on behind the scenes at DCG, we will not see "construction" start until summertime.
- Benchmarking: A team from DCG will visit the following schools in the Kansas City area in mid December. North Kansas City High School, Lee's Summit High School, Missouri Innovation Campus, Olathe Advanced Tech Center, Platte County High School
- Aesthetic Exercise: This exercise has allowed a number of staff to share what aesthetics are desired for our upcoming renovation at DCGHS.
- Programming Update: The DCG team is collaborating with OPN on the number of classrooms needed and spaces needed to make our campus a facility that would support 1,600 students for the future.

December Next Steps:

1. Program Development
 2. Engagement (Community, Students, Board)
-

Mustang University | 12.3.25

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 is dedicated to **PLC Team Meetings**. Please watch for information to come forth from your building administrator(s) and/or Instructional Coach(es) with regards to the work you will be engaged in on this day. Student Services staff will be working in their assigned building(s) to collaborate with PLC Teams unless otherwise directed.

Oak View

December 2025

Board Report

What's happening at Oak View?

Planning 8th Grade Parent Night

We are working with the High School to plan a night dedicated to the parents and guardians of our 8th grade students. During this night, parents/guardians will learn about the processes of student registration, 4 year planning, 9th grade course registration, review the course description book, the difference between an Oak View schedule and the High School block schedule. We did this last year and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive which showed us that we need to continue to offer this information to our families.

Dress Up Fun

We will be having dress up days during the last week of school before break. This is a great way for students and staff to get into the holiday spirit while at school and have a little fun. These days will be communicated to families and students prior to the dress up days so kids can plan ahead.

Clubs

We are solidifying club supervisors so we will be able to offer clubs again in January. We will communicate the available clubs to parents, as well as students, so we can ensure that all students who want to participate will be able to.

Classroom Guests

Chef Jozsef has visited a couple of our classrooms this winter. He has joined our 7th grade social studies classes, as well as our 8th grade ELA classes. It has been a great way for students to experience food through the lens of our classes and broaden their horizons.

CultureAll came in to our 7th grade social studies classes for a lesson on African drumming. It is a great experience for our students to be able to bring an experience to them while also bringing their learning to life.

Oak View is continuously grateful for the support of the board. We appreciate you.

Building: DCG Middle School	November Board Report
 <p>The graphic features a circular logo for "DALLAS CENTER GRANBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL" with a central figure. Surrounding the logo are six segments representing core values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative: Building a culture of teamwork and shared purpose to achieve our goals. Passionate: Challenging the success, well-being, and growth of every student with unwavering commitment. Innovative: Embracing creativity to meet diverse needs and challenges. Inclusive: Creating a community where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered. Supportive: Ensuring every student has the academic, social and emotional support they need to prepare for their future. DCG's Core Values <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>Mission Statement: Empowering every student to create their future.</p> <p>Vision Statement: Our district strives for excellence through innovation, and embraces growth in every dimension of education.</p> <p>DCG™</p>	<p>Building Goals:</p> <p>By May 2026, each grade (5-6) will show an increase in the percent proficient on the ELA and math subtests as measured by the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) test.</p> <p>By May 2026, DCG Middle School will score “effective” in each element of Capacity 6: Building-Wide Behavior Expectations as measured by the MTSS-B Capacity Matrix team reflection sheet.</p> <p>100% of middle school students will receive a positive communication home during both semesters of the school year.</p> <p>Over the course of the 2025-2026 school year, each PLC will keep agendas and minutes for their meetings showing integration of the Stronge Framework.</p>

Collaboration: Our middle school team is continuing our work with our district’s career and academic planning (DCAP) team. Our counselors are collaborating with our content PLCs to identify where DCAP work is already happening in our building, so that we can then work together to establish our next steps. We know that a lot of career readiness work is already happening in various classrooms, and our collaboration around this will allow us to “connect the dots” in order to streamline things and make stronger connections to our DCAP plan.

Innovative: We continue to look for innovative ways to make our professional development opportunities authentic for our staff. Last month, we spent our building PD Day looking at feedback from our staff, reviewing our Tier 1 work, and making connections to the Stronge Framework based upon what our team said was needed. Our teachers were able to break up into groups and work through rotations that included real-life scenarios and individual goal setting. We will continue to look for ways to be creative in how we deliver professional development so that it will help our teachers meet the needs of our students and any challenges that arise during the school year.

Supportive: We are wrapping up 12 Days of Giving at DCG Middle School, where students have brought in items in order to stock our local food pantry, support our Backpack Buddies program, and to fill care boxes for our local troops. We have over 1,200 items that have been donated so far! We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of our community and the support they offer both our school and those in need.

Inclusive: Our Band & Choir students performed their first concerts of the year this past week. Every one of our 445 Band & Choir members were able to perform, including many students who are beginners and never had an opportunity to play or sing in a concert before. We are incredibly proud of our students and their hard work, and grateful for our various associates who supported students throughout rehearsals and performances as needed. Thanks to Joy Augustine and Suzi Royer for their commitment to our students and community and for going above and beyond to get each one of our students prepared for this performance!

Passionate: We celebrated an awesome start to our school year with an all-school assembly on Tuesday, November 25. Students were reminded of The Mustang Way and our building's current focus on respect, and students who have been selected as a Mustang of the Month this year got to compete in a box stacking game in front of the crowd. Our students were excited about the opportunity to be a part of the assembly, and it was a competitive game, but in the end it was Red Pod who celebrated a win! Our students and staff are passionate about having more assemblies and games moving forward, and we look forward to planning our next one for this Winter!

Dallas Center Elementary

DCE Vision: To be a student-centered, inclusive community where all are welcome to learn, grow, and make a positive impact together.

DCE Mission: DCE empowers students to create an inclusive community by being kind, safe, and showing PRIDE.

Date: 12/2025



DCE Building Goals:

K-2 Goal 1 - DCE Literacy Goals and Actions

- 85% of K-2 students will be fluent readers as measured by the FAST earlyReading screener and CBMR Screener by May 2026.

3-4 Goal 1 - DCE Literacy Goals and Actions

- 80% of 3rd/4th graders will be proficient as measured by aReading by May 2026.

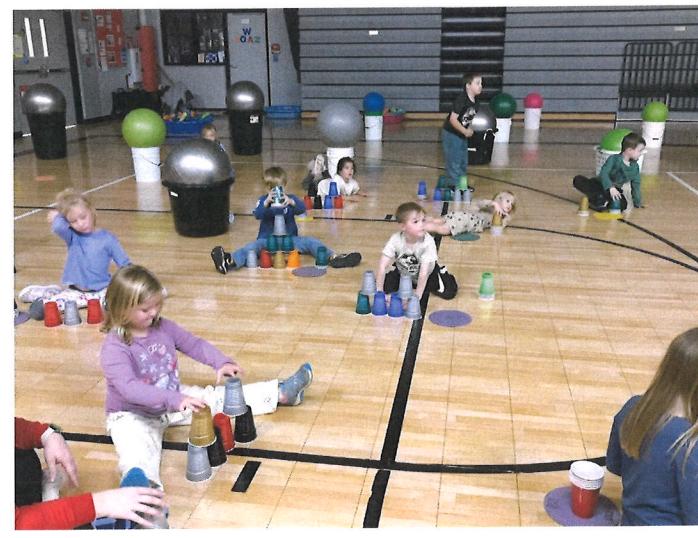
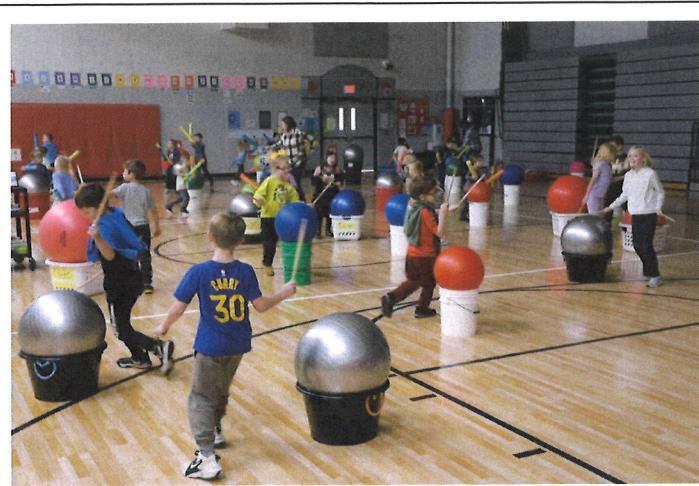
Goal 2 - Social Emotional Wellness

- With explicit social/emotional behavior instruction, and MTSS supports, students at DCE will decrease undesired behaviors by 35% as measured by major referral documentation.

Collaboration	Our music and PE teachers, Ms. Nabholz and Ms. Boaz, collaborated to create a fun and engaging unit called <i>Harmony and Hustle</i> . This fitness drumming activity is a huge hit with both students and adults. The students learn a great deal through this teamwork-driven experience and have an amazing time participating! Pictures on page 2 😊
Innovation	
Supportive	
Inclusive	We have had our second PRIDE assembly so far this school year. This is an event that all families and students look forward to. Each teacher recognizes each one of their students during one of the five assemblies we have over the course of a school year. Students get recognized for one of the letters in PRIDE. It is very rewarding to see their smiles when they are recognized. P = Problem solve together R = Recognize and honor differences I = Interact respectfully and responsibly E = Expect Excellence
Passionate	

[Preschool News Nov 24](#)

[Preschool News Dec 1](#)





Building: Heritage Elementary	December Board Report
	<p>Building Goals:</p> <p>By May 2026, 80% of each student group will meet the literacy FAST spring benchmark. (EL, Special Education, Gender, PatR/AR, Race/Ethnicity)</p> <p>By May 2026, disrespect/noncompliance minors in the classroom will decrease 20% from first semester to second semester.</p> <p>By May 2025, 80% of teachers will score each statement of the School Culture Survey with a 3 or 4.</p>

COLLABORATIVE, SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE

We were able to visit Waukee Community Schools to observe and learn about CHAMPS. CHAMPS is an acronym that stands for Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation and Success. It's a way to communicate expectations for activities with students clearly, which optimizes learning. In collaboration with Emily Donovan, building counselors, and our Tier 1 PBIS Team, Heritage Elementary is embarking on a journey to study and learn more about CHAMPS. We are hoping this tool will help us polish our classroom management and impact learning.

COLLABORATIVE & INNOVATIVE



Avery Nabholz (music teacher) and Whitney Boaz (PE teacher) collaborated to put together a unit called Harmony and Hustle. It incorporates music and movement for engaging fun!

**DCG**™

North Ridge Elementary

North Ridge Elementary	Board Report
	<p>Features:</p> <p>Collaborative, Supportive and Passionate</p>
ACADEMIC	ACADEMIC SUPPORT
By May, 2026 the percentage of students scoring "not yet proficient" in math will decrease by 5% from the previous year as measured by the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) test.	By May, 2026 the percentage of students (Grades K-4) receiving office referrals for physical incidents on the playground will reduce by 5% as compared to the previous school year.
CLIMATE / CULTURE	TEACHER EFFICACY
By May, 2026 North Ridge teachers and staff will have communicated positively to each family on at least 4 occasions.	By May, 2026, the percentage of certified staff participating in a coaching cycle related to a building goal will increase by 10% as compared to the previous school year.

Our staff's professional learning focus this year has centered on revisiting and recalibrating our PLC process to ensure stronger alignment and consistency across teams. We have fully worked through Question 1 and Question 2, deepening our clarity around what evidence demonstrates student learning. This work is visible in our day-to-day practice: teams are actively using curricular resources to identify essential standards, and implementation evidence is embedded in our PLC agendas, product templates, and collaborative discussions. Data is being used intentionally to guide instructional decisions, ensuring our responses are timely and targeted. Across all teams, we are emphasizing the importance of a guaranteed and viable curriculum so every student has access to high-quality, aligned learning experiences. Together, these steps reflect steady progress toward a more intentional and data-driven PLC culture.



North Ridge Elementary

In addition, we have engaged in intentional work around the MTSS-B capacity matrix to strengthen our schoolwide systems for supporting student behavior. Throughout the first semester, our leadership team has focused on building shared understanding, refining structures, and identifying areas of growth within the matrix. As we move into the second semester, this work will transition to our Tier One team, which will be led by our Encore staff in close collaboration with our special education teachers. This structure will allow us to maintain a consistent, schoolwide approach to behavior supports while leveraging the unique expertise of both groups. The goal is to ensure that our system is proactive, clearly communicated, and aligned with the needs of all learners.

Thank you for your continued support and student focused leadership. Please come to North Ridge and visit at any time! Have a great Holiday Season and start to 2026!

Building: South Prairie Elementary	December Board Report
	<p>Building Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By May 2026, 80% of South Prairie students will meet the expected benchmark OR make the expected grade level growth designated by the FAST assessment. • By May 2026, 80% of all South Prairie students receiving Tier 2 behavior support will show positive growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. • By May 2026, South Prairie teachers and staff will communicate positively to each student's family on 3 occasions. • By May 2026, 100% of South Prairie teachers will complete 1 coaching cycle.

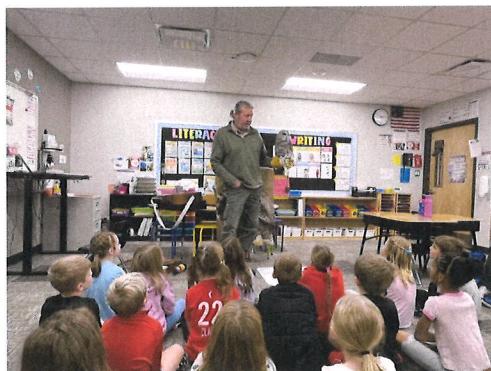
- Third graders completed their unit on immigration. Some of the things they learned included what would influence people to leave one country to move to another one. They also learned about the Statue of Liberty. It was fun to watch them take the practice citizenship test. In math they have also been working on addition and subtraction using the standard algorithm. They worked on place value, borrowing, and carrying. This was a contrast to the math I was able to observe in 2nd grade where they were using the number line to jump and figure out the difference between two numbers based on the jumps they made from one friendly number to the next and adding those jumps up to find the difference. Jump into Kindergarten and you see them counting to 50 as well as counting by 10's. In 4th grade you would see them multiplying two digit by 1 digit numbers and starting early division with remainders. We'd love to have you visit to see the varying degrees of math from grade level to grade level.
- We have partnered with Jodi Cross from the AEA for our building PD. She has been doing training around literacy. She is a certified LETRS trainer, and has been doing a lot of that training with us. She recently completed walkthroughs in the building, focusing on small group instruction in all grade levels. She was very complimentary of all the groups and shared how many great things are going on in the building. It is also a great way for her to see the teachers in action so she can add pieces to professional development when she feels there are areas she can enhance teachers' instruction.
- Chef Jozsef was able to give each of our students a culinary experience before Thanksgiving break as he taught them how to measure and make apple crisp. They each got to then try the creation with most giving it a great review, and a few who decided it wasn't for them. They all do a great job of at least trying something they might not have tasted before.



- Our students participated in the culminating event of the PTO fundraising event. They collect “pledges” which come in a basic amount of donations for them to run in a glow run. As a combined elementary team, we earned over \$60,000 which is used for teacher grants, and other ways to support students and teachers in the elementary buildings. Photos below show how much fun the students have. Our PTO worked hard to get donations from local businesses so that every child and staff member also received a tshirt which also glowed. I love how inclusive we are able to make this event for all our students. Every single student is able to participate in this event and we are always amazed at their stamina as some grade levels ran/walked for 50 minutes or more! The company brings a DJ and makes the time go fast with fun things for them to do the entire time.



- Our yearly collaboration with the naturalist from Dallas County Conservation is always something we look forward to in 1st grade. I learned that this owl, who was rescued 16 years ago, has way outlived barred owls who would be in the wild. Each year when I have the opportunity to sit and listen to his presentation, I always learn something new. The students are always so attentive and quiet and absolutely LOVE hearing about owls and how they can prevent animals from ending up in accidents like this one did causing him to be in captivity.



- We have passionate teachers and learners who put their everything into each and every day. Recently, Mrs. Sedrel read the book, Humble Pie, to her students. In this book, The Humble Pie doesn't like the spotlight and instead likes to give it to others. He learns that he does need to let his voice be heard by the end of the book when he does a project with his friend, Jake the Cake. The students created and “baked” their own pies with a little competition. They had so much fun with this activity and learned a great lesson while doing so.





Human Resources Board Report
December 2025

Qualtrics Mid-Year Checkin

We have recently sent a mid-year engagement survey to all staff. This will provide another data point as we continue to monitor the health of our organization.

We asked the following questions, which mirror what we asked last May:

- My Manager communicates with me effectively.
- My Manager is visible and accessible throughout my building.
- I receive feedback that helps me improve my performance.
- I can share my opinions openly without fear of retaliation.
- I receive meaningful recognition when I do a good job.
- I have access to the resources (materials, equipment, technology, etc.) that I need to do my job effectively.

One piece of feedback that we received in May was that nearly 23% of our staff either **Disagree** or **Strongly Disagree** with the following prompt:

“I receive meaningful recognition when I do a good job”

Due to that feedback, in conjunction with AJ and this Communications Department, we implemented monthly **Creator Awards**. In the survey, we asked staff if this step was an overall positive move, and what other ideas they may have in order to better meet this specific need.

Career Fairs

Jami and I will be attending Iowa State's Teacher Career Fair in March.

This was a very meaningful opportunity for us to meet prospective candidates last spring and to help bring young educators to DCG ... and it led to us hiring someone! Hopefully we'll be as fortunate this year.

Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District

Board Report from Madison Melchert, Activities Director

Date: December 2025

Winter Activities

We are just at the start of December and we are already on our way to doing amazing things! We have so many kids continuing to work on their crafts. Our gyms are buzzing in the morning and late into the evening with practices and games. Rehearsals are in full force for our multitude of fine arts activities we will see later this winter as they take center stage.

- **Boys Basketball** - Our boys basketball program is off to a solid start. The team has shown strong early-season growth and competitive consistency, highlighted by quality play on both ends of the floor. They will return to home action on December 19, hosting Oskaloosa in their first home Little Hawkeye Conference matchup.
- **Girls Basketball** - The girls continue to validate their #1 IGHSAU ranking, powering through a challenging early schedule with poise and purpose. Their performance reflects the high standards they set this offseason, and they have been competing with confidence and composure. They'll also return home on December 19 vs. Oskaloosa, which will double as Youth Girls Basketball Night, which is always a special evening for our future Mustangs.
- **Boys Wrestling** - December has brought a strong stretch of home competition for our boys wrestling program. They opened their season with a decisive home dual victory over Norwalk and followed it with an impressive team win at the Andy Davidson Invitational last weekend. Their depth, preparation, and collective grit are already showing through.
- **Girls Wrestling** - Our girls wrestling program continues to build momentum. They earned a big opening-night dual win over Norwalk and will keep that energy rolling as they prepare to host their home dual-team tournament on December 20. This group continues to raise the bar for what girls wrestling looks like in our community and conference.
- **Dance** - Our Girls Dance team had a phenomenal State event. We had the State Solo Champion, our Jazz routine got 3rd and Hip Hop placed 5th. What a tremendous season!

Culture & Identity

As we shift into winter activities, the strength of our DCG community continues to shine. A great example came from our boys wrestling program this past weekend. Hosting 11 schools is a

major lift, yet our coaches, athletes, and families worked together seamlessly to put on an outstanding event. Their teamwork, effort, and pride in representing DCG was unmistakable.

At the same time, our girls basketball team is modeling another side of our identity, passion and focus. Despite the pressure that comes with a #1 ranking, they continue to play with purpose, discipline, and a standard of work that reflects the culture they've built.

Together, these moments paint a clear picture of who we are becoming as a district: a community that shows up for one another, works hard, and takes pride in doing things the right way. I'm excited to see that spirit continue to grow throughout the winter season.

Operations & Finances

This month, I want to highlight how grateful we are for our continued partnership with our Facilities and Maintenance team. Their support has been invaluable as we work to strengthen and streamline our operations. From providing extra custodial help at events, to collaborating with us on improving rental processes, to the essential assistance with snow removal during this busy season, their teamwork makes a tremendous difference.

We truly appreciate their willingness to step in, problem-solve, and work alongside our department. Having a group that is committed to helping our programs succeed allows us to better serve our students and community. We are incredibly thankful to have them on our team.

From a financial standpoint, we continue to monitor our cash versus card sales at events. At our recent home wrestling tournament, we saw a noticeable increase in card transactions compared to cash. It's encouraging to see this trend continue, especially at our larger events, as it helps streamline our operations and improves the overall event experience.

Personal Highlight

My highlight this month has been the natural transition between seasons. As fall wrapped up and winter began, I've had the chance to spend intentional time with each of our fall coaches and directors, while also diving into the start of the winter season with our winter leaders. It's energizing to work alongside so many different individuals who are doing incredible things for our kids. Their passion is something you can see and feel, and it's a privilege to be part of it. I'm excited to continue growing with all of our coaches and directors as the year moves forward.

Looking Ahead

January is shaping up to be a busy and exciting month at DCG. One of our biggest community events, the Booster Club Cake Auction, is coming up on January 16th, and we're looking forward to another great night of support and celebration for our programs.

On the performance side, our Show Choir, Jazz Choir, Jazz Band, and Speech programs all have a full slate of competitions and showcases ahead. It's an exciting stretch where our students get to highlight the hard work they've been putting in over the past several months.

From a department standpoint, we're continuing to dig into several important operational areas, including our facility rental processes, personnel needs, and long-term planning. We're also in ongoing conversations with OPN and the District Office as we look at future facility needs connected to the bond. There is a lot of meaningful work ahead, and we're committed to staying thoughtful and forward-focused as we support our growing programs.

Madison Melchert
Activities Director
Dallas Center-Grimes High School

Transportation Report



November 2025

Staffing:

We are in great shape with school bus drivers so far this year. We have as strong of a team as we've ever had serving as school bus drivers, mechanics, and support staff. They are truly great people, and I feel fortunate to lead this team—they make my job easy.

We are fully staffed on all school bus routes, have a dedicated reserve driver, and a solid group of substitute drivers in our bullpen. The only gap we're navigating is being down one mechanic for a few months due to a planned medical leave of absence. Brandon has done an outstanding job and put in some long days keeping our buses safe and on the road during John's absence.

Technology on the school bus:

I secured a quote from our transportation software vendor for upgrading the technology on our school buses. This upgrade will bring our families up to date with the latest tools available and significantly enhance our service.

This upgrade includes the following:

1. Tablets on all school buses, connected via cellular service
2. Tablets professionally mounted with hard covers for protection
3. Tablets covered under a Transfinder service agreement
4. Wayfinder Software on tablets have the following features: [VIDEO: [Wayfinder](#)]
 5.
 - a. Student scan-on/scan-off tracking Turn-by-turn navigation
 - b. Full student information and contact details, including student photo
 - c. Electronic pre-trip school bus inspection
 - d. Deficiency and work-order reporting completed electronically
 - e. Activity trip navigation support
 6. Stopfinder Parent Smart Phone Application [VIDEO: [STOP Finder](#)]
 - a. Be able to see where their child's bus is located in real-time
 - b. Receive optional notifications when the bus enters their neighborhood
 - c. Receive optional notification when their child scans on/off the school bus
 - d. Send and receive messages direct to their child's school bus driver

If approved, we will install the hardware by spring break; train school bus drivers in April and May; introduce Stopfinder to a select group of parents in May; and then roll out the parent app to all families over the summer. We plan to use the funds previously allocated for a new school bus next year to cover the hardware costs.

v/r

Jeff Wolfe, Transportation Director



Student Services Board Report
December 17, 2025
Alyson Finley

Special Education	<p>Teachers administering Iowa's Alternate Assessment continue to complete testlets in the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) system to ensure all eligible students are assessed within the designated testing window.</p> <p>All special education teachers participated in their FLEX Day professional learning on December 10, 2025.</p> <p>Teachers at Oak View and the high school continued their collaborative work on transition planning for students with IEPs.</p> <p>All other teachers engaged in self-selected professional learning opportunities, including alternate assessment training, reading intensification, online modules, and related topics.</p>
ELL	<p>The ELL Team has begun planning for the administration of the ELPA-21 assessment.</p> <p>They met with Cindra Porter on December 10, 2025 to discuss equitable grading practices for multilingual learners and how to support all teachers in providing language rich scaffolds for students.</p>
Counseling	<p>School counselors met on December 10. They continue to refine their mission and vision and align counseling practices across the district.</p> <p>The counseling team revisited the Suicide Prevention and Response Plan and reviewed the district At-Risk Plan being shared with the board on December 17, 2025.</p>
Networking Systems 25-26 school year	<p>I continue to participate in statewide special education webinars as they are offered. This month's session focused on Unique Placements. The IDOE provided updates on expectations related to Unique Placements for learners with disabilities, and presenters reviewed recent case law that may influence practice changes in special education.</p>



Dallas Center-Grimes Food Services Newsletter

December 2025



Taste and Learn: Chef Brings Culinary Lessons to Students

Students explored the comforting flavors of Shepherd's Pie, learning how food connects to memories and traditions. Another lesson highlighted the Middle East with a demo of chocolate hummus, teaching the history of hummus, its cultural impact, and global popularity. In elementary schools, gingerbread decorating at Heritage and DCE introduced students to the origins of gingerbread, the role of spices, and how those flavors create holiday favorites. Food isn't just tasty, it's a gateway to culture, history, and creativity. Every recipe tells a story, and these lessons help students discover the world one bite at a time.



Matt Pasma
DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES
515-423-6356
Matthew.Pasma@COMPASS-USA.COM

Chili Days, WARM BELLIES



Chef Jozsef treated an Oak View Social Studies class to a savory Denver Scramble as part of Chili Days!



DISCOVERY KITCHEN FUN

Spice It Up !

chartwells
Discovery
KITCHEN

Spice It Up is a celebration of international recipes that are proven to raise the bar of the spice rack. It empowers students to cook with seasonings that are sure to spice up any meal with their family and friends. Throughout December, we'll engage students with fresh recipes, delicious demos, and fun and informative nutrition education.

Get ready to add a little spice to your day!



Cookies Take Center Stage on National Cookie Day!



Over 550 students enjoyed a free cookie during lunch, making the celebration one to remember. Students were treated to a delicious variety of options, including classic chocolate chip cookies, colorful M&M cookies, and soft sugar cookies. The event brought smiles and excitement to the lunchroom, proving that sometimes the simplest treats create the biggest moments.

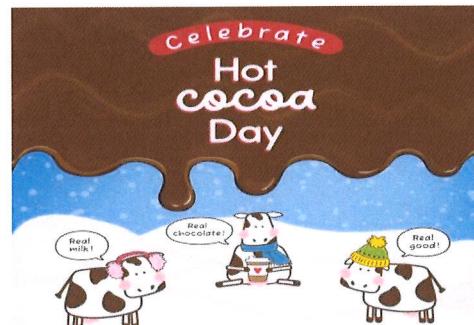


FUN DAYS THIS MONTH:

Cookie Day was a sweet success!



We are excited to be offering a cup of hot cocoa with mini marshmallows for Hot Cocoa Day.



We hope you enjoy a restful break and look forward to welcoming you back in the new year!



Operations Department**Shatava/Donahue****December 2025****Baseball/Softball Complex Work-**

We were able to get all the concrete poured at Baseball for the new batting cages before the first snowfall. This will help us greatly in the spring by allowing us to get the new cages up and ready for our team to use. The bunker system was also completed and is prepared for us to use to store our field maintenance supplies. This was a good project to get checked off our list before the weather got too bad.

REMI Insurance-

This partnership continues to prove to be a good decision. We have found solutions to problems that have negatively impacted our buildings for years. Baker Group has been a good partner for us. They have discovered issues at Oak View that, upon investigation, were found to be improper settings on the installed HVAC equipment. This team has helped us find solutions to problems and reduce the number of issues students and staff are having. Having technicians in the district every day has dramatically improved our response time to breakdowns and problems. We continue to find ways to streamline and improve our process, and from our department's perspective, this has been an excellent addition to our district.

New Operations Equipment-

We want to thank the board for approving our new equipment. We have had two significant snow events, and the equipment we have purchased has proven to be worth the investment. With the new Avant (Mini Payloader) and the Gator, we have completed all in-house snow removal at the Transportation/Operations facility. We have also been able to clear and treat all of the sidewalks at our Grimes buildings. Being able to do these things has saved us money by avoiding the need to pay a contractor for snow removal at one location and by preventing our custodians from having to shovel snow and spread ice melt. We thank this board for allowing us to obtain these pieces of equipment, and we wanted to provide an update on how they are being used and how they are helping save funds and time.

Bond Update-

With the passing of the Bond referendum, we have started to see progress on various projects that will begin this summer. Every month, we will give you an update on Bond-related issues from the Operations Department's standpoint. The goal is to help keep the board as up to date as possible on the progress of projects supported by the bond.

-We have gotten surveys from Bishop Engineering, and the board will need to take action on them. These surveys are to help us get the necessary data at all of our potential construction sites. Many of these are for the playground projects at our 5 elementary schools. The other surveys are intended to help understand the scope of work needed at the High School and our Operations/Transportation facility. We have spoken with Bishop and reviewed the survey agreements to understand the scope of work they want to undertake. Once the surveys are done, this information will be vital for any construction project we do.

-We have met with a Playground Equipment Vendor and have gone to all of our elementary sites to look at the current playground equipment and layout. This vendor is willing to provide us with renderings of different options to show to stakeholders. We have also sent our communication to parents and staff to gather their input on what they want to see in an inclusive playground. The next step is to hold an open house to let stakeholders see the renderings to gain more input. Once all input is collected, we will work with our vendors and construction team to begin gathering specifications and put these projects out to bid as soon as possible so that we can get on vendors' calendars for this summer.

-We had our first steering committee meeting to talk about the design and layout of our new operations facility and renovations to our transportation facility. Early conversations about the type of expansion we need to consider for 10-15 years down the road, and how to better use our current space to meet the needs of our district.

-Timelines are critical, so we can start to plan out our projects. We are working with OPN to establish a clear timeline for the secure entries at North Ridge and DCE. We would like these projects completed this summer and to be the first construction projects ready for the start of the 26-27 school year.

Sean Shatava
Director of Maintenance and Grounds

Travis Donahue
Director of Custodial Services and Buildings

December Communications Board Report

DCG Creators - We had another great group of DCG Creators to celebrate in December. I joined Dr. Blum and Cary Justmann on a trip through our district last Friday. This is becoming a great tradition in our district and a powerful way to connect our work to the strategic plan.

Emergency Alert Test - I ran our annual emergency communication alert on Wednesday, December 10. This test features our urgent alerts through ParentSquare (email, phone call, text message). We've identified a few issues with user accounts and made timely corrections for our account holders. I'd like to thank our parents and staff members for their partnership. Who knows when we will need to use this alert system on a real snow day?!?

Bond Referendum Updates - We will continue to use our [2025 Bond Referendum website](#) throughout the construction process. We've transitioned to the page to include updates and progress, and will continue building on this site in the days and weeks to come. This page will also include photos of our benchmarking trip to Kansas City. I am thankful to join our team on this trip! Exciting times!!

Innovation in PE at South Prairie - Here's one of my favorite stories from the month! We've seen sports teams use film as a way to improve; our students are doing the same at South Prairie. Chris Nash has set up an iPad that records our students' shooting form at their free-throw station during their basketball unit. After they take a shot, Mr. Nash meets them at the iPad to look for ways to improve before taking their next turn. Here are a [few photos!](#)

67th Day of School - The video that performed the best on social media this month won't surprise you! December 3 was our 67th day of school. Needless to say, we didn't have trouble finding volunteers to help with [the video](#).

Thanks for your continued support of DCG! - AJ



Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District

Teaching and Learning Board Report

Shana Olson
Director of Teaching & Learning

December 2025

December is always a bit of a whirlwind with so much going on in our buildings and with teachers! This month our teaching and learning team has hosted a grade level meeting, as well as Encore PLCs and Curriculum Review teams for Science and Computer Science. You can find more details below about the work of these groups.

Professional Learning

First and second grade teachers had their grade level meeting, collaborating on their instructional planning, assessments and engagement strategies within our literacy resource MyView. Teachers were able to share their own ideas and take in the ideas of their colleagues across the district. We hope to be able to expand our opportunities for this type of collaboration in the future.

Encore teams continue their PLC and curriculum work through their time together each month. The music team has been heavily involved in review curriculum, developing concert literature lists, and selecting lesson books. This work is so important as we work to develop our K-12 program. Our elementary counselors were able to come together with their curriculum facilitator, Alex Glade, in collaboration with Alyson Finley to discuss alignment of their program review and curriculum review as well as consider what will be most helpful in providing instruction through our guidance courses. This month, health and PE focused on PLC collaboration with like grade levels to continue vertical conversations. Art teachers are engaging in visits to area art classrooms in preparation for considering curriculum and instruction within our art program. They had the opportunity to reflect on recent visits and prepare for upcoming visits.

Our K-4 science content leads and 5-12 science teachers came together for Year 1 work in the curriculum review cycle. Teachers were engaged in opportunities to dig deeper into the newly revised Iowa Academic Standards for science as well as continue the conversation around how to enhance and develop our science program at DCG.

Computer Science representatives across the district came together to continue their work of integrating computer science standards at the K-4 elementaries and for 5-12 to enhance their alignment across the buildings to ensure smoother transitions and coherence for students.



Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District

Curriculum Review Cycle

As you can see from the information above, our curriculum review cycle is in full swing. While we continue to move forward with processes currently in place, our curriculum team has been collaborating on refining our review process to include more intentional stakeholder input and communication. One way you will see this is through a science focused stakeholder survey that will be coming out in January. We hope to gain valuable insights from our families regarding instructional materials in our classrooms to layer in with teacher perspectives that we have already collected.

Additionally, we've added some board communications that you will be seeing in the coming months regarding curriculum review outcomes and procedures. I am looking forward to sharing more with the board about our process.