

JEFFERSON JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2025

- **7th-** PTO meeting at 4:15 pm
- **13th-** Native American Day (no school)
- **15th-** Picture Retake Day
- **29th** - Early dismissal at 12:20 pm for Inservice



WE ARE ALL



MR. DECKER'S NOTES

On September 24th, 2025 our classroom teachers were granted time to analyze recent NWEA MAPS testing. Staff were presented school-wide data and classroom data. We looked for trends, strengths, and weaknesses. Teachers were then challenged to look at the instructional areas for both Math and ELA for their class then each individual student. The MAPS test allows us to identify areas of need for growth and how we can group students based on specific skills, in order to provide better instruction. Teachers examined the data to set new goals for their students when the time comes to take the Winter Benchmark in January. Thank you for allowing us this time to ensure the best instruction for your child to succeed in an ever-changing world.

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

I will continue to beat the drum on attendance matters! Missing two or more days a month and a total of 18 days is considered chronically absent. After one month of school, we have 22 students or 6.61% of our student population that is chronically absent. This is 1.67% more than last year at this time!

Attendance is one component that impacts our SPI score. This score is made up of Student Performance, Student Progress, and School Environment. More information will be shared in the November newsletter regarding the 24-25 SPI score, achievement trends, and attendance. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

90% ATTENDANCE

We are adding a new incentive this year for our students to achieve. At the end of each quarter, we will calculate their attendance percentage and if they are above 90% they will receive a magnet to take home. Studies have shown that when students are in school over 90% of the school year, they achieve greater. That means missing fewer than 18 days the entire school year. We are hoping that we can do even better than that. Our yearly average per student is approximately 97%.

It also sets good habits for life. ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Attendance Traveling Trophy

We will continue our monthly challenge of rewarding the classroom from each grade level with a traveling trophy filled with their favorite candies. September's winner were:

1st- Mrs. Gades

2nd- Mrs. Johnson

3rd- Mrs. Turbak. Winner of Donut Party with 98.135% attendance!!

4th- Mrs. Gilmour

Sincerely,

John J. Decker

john.decker@k12.sd.us

605-882-6390

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

So many things our students are learning as they begin the new year. But what about parents? Please take time to read our Student/Parent Handbook. There are many questions that can be answered in advance. These are expectations set forth by our school district and school which we feel are important to ensure success for your children.

Safety is a **PRIORITY** for all of our schools. We ask that whenever you come to our school you buzz in at the East entry door. Please report to the office to receive a sticker if planning to stay or to take care of business.

Students should not be bringing items from home unless it is part of a classroom request. Please check your child's bookbag. Often times, toys, Pokémon cards, electronic devices are brought to school. These can be lost or disappear in which the school is not responsible.

All of our classrooms have a drinking fountain. However, if your child chooses to bring a container, we ask for it to be clear. Content of the water bottle should be water (flavored is ok). However, please refrain from colored juices, energy drinks, coffee drinks, or soda. Students may be asked to pour them out.

Communicating with the office when your child is absent is important. Please contact the office at 882-6390. You cannot rely on texting or e-mailing the teacher, especially if they get busy or are gone for the day. Someone will contact you if we do not hear of your child's whereabouts by 9:00 AM. Please read the new attendance expectations. Thank you for your cooperation!

NURSE NOTES

Should Student stay home or go home?

Stay in school:

- Cold symptoms without a fever
- Cough without a fever
- Diarrhea without a fever
- Head Lice up to the Nurse/Principal will decide
- Pink eye unless a dr note states differently
- Rash unless it is oozing or a fever

Go home:

- Fever of 100 or more
- Vomitting

**** These symptoms are not absolute indicators. Discretion will also be used when determining whether a student should remain in class or be sent home.**

PEANUT SAFE SCHOOL

We are a Peanut Safe facility. This means that we do NOT serve anything with peanuts due to the vast number of students with some type of peanut allergy ranging from minor to life-threatening. We cannot control what students may bring for lunch, but we do ask that if your child/children only eat Peanut Butter sandwiches, please make the teacher aware, so if any classmates are allergic to peanuts, we can make sure they are placed safely apart. We also ask that if you bring treats for the class, to be mindful of any fellow classmates that may have an allergy and choose something peanut free. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ann, the school nurse at Jefferson.

Technology- Acceptable Usage

Personal Insurance Coverage

Students are financially responsible for the cost of repairs to computers or devices that are damaged intentionally or due to negligence. Students or parents may wish to carry their own personal insurance, but not necessary, to protect the laptop in cases of theft, loss, or damage. Please consult with an insurance agent for details about personal coverage of the laptop

Negligence or Intentional Damage

Attempting to repair, remove, or install hardware and software components is prohibited. Vandalizing or damaging the machine is prohibited, including but not limited to pencil marks, stickers, graffiti, burning or other markings, broken screens, broken hinges, damaged cases or cords, or exposure to extreme temperatures.

Disassembling machine in any form or fashion is prohibited

The cost of repairs due to negligence or intentional damage will be the responsibility of the student.

Examples of negligence could include but are not limited to: liquid spills on the keyboard, broken hinges or screen damage due to closing the computer with paper or objects inside, pulling the machine off a desk by catching the cord, dropping the computer, or disassembling any technology resources. Please refer to the WHS Laptop Repair Guidelines for more information.

Students may wish to carry their own personal insurance to protect the laptop in cases of theft, loss, or accidental damage. Please consult with an insurance agent for details about personal coverage of the laptop computer.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK OF THE MONTH

Just Ask by Sonia Sotomayor

In a colorful garden, Sonia Sotomayor draws upon her experiences as a child with juvenile diabetes to address kids' curiosity about disability and illness.





(September 29- October 10)



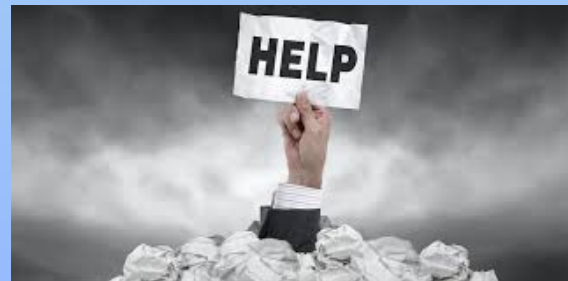
Listening

- 1. Look at the person who is talking and remain quiet**
- 2. Wait until the person is through talking before speaking**
- 3. Show that you heard them by nodding your head, saying "okay"**

(October 13- October 24)

Asking for Help

- 1. Look at the person**
- 2. Ask the person if they have time to help you**
- 3. Clearly explain the kind of help you need**
- 4. Thank the person for helping**



Jefferson School Library

Dear Parents,

Reading is one for the most important skills your child will learn in school. Like all skills, improvement comes with practice, and the Jefferson School Library provides a wide variety of books for students to borrow for reading practice, information, and enjoyment. Your student's class will visit the school library weekly to select books. You can help your student by reading to or with him/her and asking questions about the story. Encourage your child to spend time reading at home every day.

- ☒ Students are responsible to handle library books with care, since they are for everyone to share. Please keep books away from pets, food, and all liquids.
- ☒ Any book damage should be reported to the library as soon as possible so we can attempt repairs.
- ☒ If a book is lost or damaged, payment toward a replacement will be requested from the parents.
- ☒ If your family plans to move, please return all books before moving.

We hope your children will read and enjoy many books and grow in reading skills while attending our school.



Picture Retakes

Oct 15th

8:00 am

You must bring in your picture packet.



PICTURE RETAKE DAY!



Counselor's Corner

with Mrs. Flemming



HOW CAN I HELP MY KIDS STAY CALM?

Many many many kids struggle with emotional regulation. Kids can go from 0 to 100 for seemingly no reason at all. Unfortunately, we all know that stressed, angry, worried, frustrated, sad, or upset kids find it harder to excel. And this means that helping kids manage these BIG emotions is actually an extremely important part of parenting. Helping our little ones appropriately manage big emotions will benefit them right now and throughout their entire lives. *Self-regulation* is the ability to control our emotions and behaviors, and it's something we start to learn as children. And when kids are small, they actually have little to no self-control. That part of their brains hasn't yet developed. And kids actually don't always understand appropriate from inappropriate; they rely on us to teach them and help them decipher acceptable behavior going forward. The following are some strategies to help your kids remain calm and develop lifelong coping skills.

1. **Don't over schedule-** Many kids struggle with transitions, and full schedules can leave them feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. Adults are often guilty of feeling like kids need to be entertained during every part of every day. Kids need downtime, just like we need rest. They need to chill, pretend play, be silly, and just, well — be kids.
2. **Embrace Routine-** Try to keep your daily routine as consistent as possible. Kids thrive on consistency and actually like structure- even if they don't know it. When you create routines, you lessen the likelihood that a child will feel like they've lost control, leading to them struggling to regain control. Consistent routines help kids feel safe and develop coping mechanisms.
3. **Teach about emotions-** Many people grow up without knowing what they're feeling or why they feel that way. So how do you teach kids about emotions? Give them lots of words to describe the way they feel. If your child is sad, talk about sadness in detail, such as what it feels like and where it lives in their bodies.
4. **Acknowledge and Empathize-** When kids are upset, struggling, angry, sad, or frustrated, it's easy to want to move immediately into solving these problems for them. But when we see a child struggling, the first step should be to acknowledge the emotion and provide some empathy before problem-solving, distracting, or giving advice. This doesn't take long; it might look like this:

** I can see you are upset right now. I'm sorry you are feeling this way.*

** It's hard when your friends don't share; that must make you feel really frustrated.*

** I hate it as well when someone makes fun of me. You must feel very sad.*

** I can see you are angry, and I get it; it's so hard when things don't go our way*

What is so amazing about using empathy is that the child hears that you care about them, notice how they feel, and they feel like they matter.

Reminder: Showing empathy doesn't mean we are excusing or allowing inappropriate behavior. It's the first step to correcting this behavior. It helps de-escalate an upset child. Think about how hard it is for a young child to behave perfectly all day long! Especially when their brains aren't fully developed.

5. **Check-In- Remember:** A child misbehaving is NOT a bad child. Behavior is the way kids ask for help. Often, kids dealing with something difficult will "act out" to cope with their feelings. They are doing their best with the skills they have to communicate their needs, and we need to put on our investigative caps and figure out how to help them. Kids will often act out if they need some attention, are bored, feel sad, anxious, hungry or tired. The most important thing is to remember that your kids need something from you. Once kids feel like they've gotten our attention, help them calm down by connecting with them. Hold their hand or sit with them to let them know they're not alone.
6. **Positive Reinforcement-** Praise is a powerful tool that can increase internal motivation to want to succeed. Don't fall into the trap of only calling out bad behavior. Notice the good and make a point to tell your kids when they are succeeding. In time, they will seek this type of reinforcement and therefore aim to do good.
7. **Teach coping strategies-** Adults can help kids calm down by providing calm-down strategies to choose from when they are upset. Here are some examples:
Belly Breathes: Breathe in slowly through your nose, hold in for three seconds, and exhale through your mouth
Repeat calming thoughts in your head: I am safe, I can calm my body.
Hold a soothing object (fidget toy, stuffy).
Journaling: Write about how you are feeling.
8. **Set Clear Boundaries-** Kids need to know what is expected of them. Do you expect them to speak respectfully? Do chores? Do homework before free time? You need to make these boundaries super clear. Setting boundaries doesn't mean that your kids won't push those boundaries because these are, well, kids, and that's their job. But boundaries are essential to creating a safe and loving environment and integral to parenting.
Important: Setting boundaries doesn't mean kids won't be upset when boundaries are upheld. They might be downright angry, but it's all part of learning and creating that safe environment.
9. **Be the Calm-** The truth is, kids are kids, and they all misbehave sometimes. But what we can definitely do is manage our reactions to their behavior. We need to model appropriate behavior to kids. After all, kids learn what is and isn't appropriate behavior by watching us. Even if your kids just smeared permanent marker all over the wall, or are screaming in your face that they hate you, or negotiating every.little.thing, YES, you STILL have to remain calm. The best way to help kids is to change your reactions to their behavior — good or bad.



Kids Hope USA (KHUSA) is a national organization that equips churches to serve their local public elementary schools by providing positive adults to serve as mentors. Because KHUSA mentors are trained to respect the separation of church and state, these programs are welcomed in hundreds of districts across the country. KHUSA currently supports over 1,000 programs in the US... including our 3 elementary schools here in Watertown.

The motto of Kids Hope USA is the POWER of ONE... to build caring, life-changing relationships between one student, one mentor, for one hour each week. The mentors spend one hour per week talking, reading, playing, and listening to a child at school. Research shows that by helping a child feel loved and valued, the child can better learn, grow, and succeed. Jefferson Elementary is proud to be a Kids Hope USA school!

If you are reading this message, please email me at erica.reis@k12.sd.us to receive your prize.

Bullying Prevention 101

A quick guide for elementary school students

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when someone:

- is hurt by unwanted words or actions,
- usually more than once, and
- has a hard time stopping what is happening to them.

WHERE AND WHEN DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?

Bullying can happen anywhere, anytime. It can occur in your neighborhood, on your way to and from school, at school, and while online.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Using **technology**, such as email, texts, social media, online gaming, or pictures to hurt or harm someone else with unwanted, aggressive, and repeated behavior.



WHO IS INVOLVED?

TARGET ➡ Person who is being bullied

STUDENT WHO BULLIES ➡ Person whose actions cause hurt or harm

WITNESS OR BYSTANDER ➡ Person who sees or knows of the behavior

Note: "Person" may mean one individual or a group of people.

A person can have more than just one role!
The role that any student plays in a bullying situation can change.

Report to PARENTS

The Rewards of Reading

The seeds for success in the classroom are sown at home. Encouraging children to read at home is one of the most powerful ways that parents can support students' learning. Just 15 minutes of reading at home per day can make a difference in students' reading fluency. Prioritize reading with these tips.

Always have books on hand. Keep a book in your bag or your car's glove compartment so your child can read in the car, or while waiting in line at the grocery store. Make regular trips to the library, and keep an eye out for books at bargain sales or garage sales. Or, consider holding a "book swap" with neighbors and friends. For birthdays or holidays, give your child new reading material.

Keep it up. Find ways to encourage your child to pick up new reading material to read once one book is finished. For instance, introduce him or her to a series or ask your librarian for books by the same author. Draft a "to-read" list that your child can check off. Consider subscribing your child to a magazine for kids.

Focus on their interests.

Encourage your child to check out books from the library that feature characters or topics he or she is interested in. Whether it's NASCAR to NASA, the topic doesn't matter (as long as it's age-appropriate), as long as your child is reading.

Read out loud together. Schedule time to read aloud together, taking turns to read passages. Invite your entire family to participate. Use different voices for different characters, or invite your child to make sound effects for the story.

Make it a routine. Consider how to make reading habitual. Your family could have a weekly read-aloud session, or you and your child could read each week before bed.

Be a patient listener. No matter how slowly your young learner reads, avoid finishing sentences for your child. Gently correct mistakes, sound out words together, and let your child know you're proud.



Cut the distractions. During reading time, turn off or put away electronic devices. Make sure you follow the rule, too.

Ask questions. Ask your child about what he or she is reading in school or what you are reading together. Try open-ended questions such as, "Why do you think the character did that?" "What would you do if you were in that situation?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

Read beyond books. Invite your child to read menus, greeting cards, movie listings, newspaper comic strips, or directions to a destination. Word recognition is an important step for reading fluency, so consider using strips of paper and tape to label everyday objects in your home to boost your child's familiarity with words.

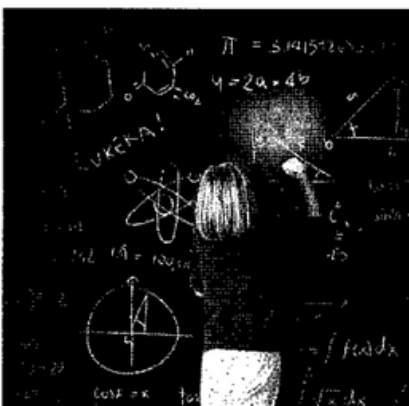
Report to PARENTS

Dos and Don'ts for Building Deep Math Skills

Though Common Core math problems may look complex, math itself hasn't changed. One plus one is still two. What has shifted is the way schools teach math under many states' new college- and career-readiness standards. To prepare students for an increasingly technical world, many teachers are working to strengthen students' deep math knowledge—how, where, and why math ideas fit together. How can you support that work at home? Here are six dos and don'ts.

Do know how elementary math builds.

As your child progresses from kindergarten into later elementary grades, math concepts will build on one another. For instance, under the Common Core, second graders learn how to break rectangles into two, three, or four equal parts. Third graders learn how to place these fractions on a number line and compare fractions' size. This leads to fourth graders being able to add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers. Teachers call this vertical understanding—knowing how skills build across grade levels. Your child's teacher can explain related learning goals for each grade.



this at home by asking, "How do you know?" and "Do you think that's always true?"

Do make math as fun as possible. Sure, boosting deep math knowledge may feel like serious business. But to build your child's math confidence—which wavers for many students as math gets tougher—celebrate successes. Praise your child for studying hard, arriving at an answer, or tackling a tricky problem for the first time. Play age- and skill-appropriate math games that bring math to life and boost family fun.

Do focus on mastery, not tricks. To understand new, complex math concepts, students have to leverage ideas and skills they've already learned. Students can't make those connections if we present math as a series of rules or shortcuts. If your child asks for help, talk through assignments, reread textbook passages, or draw a picture together, if possible.

Don't press your child to move too quickly. If pushed through challenging ideas too fast, students can develop gaps of understanding and they won't be prepared to tackle high school math. Have honest conversations with your child's teacher about whether your child is on target, or needs extra help or enrichment.

Don't take the reins. If your child is struggling, it can be tempting to show him or her how to finish a problem. As much as possible, try to coach your child through the assignment. Many teachers are moving away from showing students how to simply compute answers; instead, they place students in small groups to explore challenges. At home, allow your child to put on his or her critical thinking cap.

Do ask extra questions. In the classroom, your child's teacher may ask questions that assess students' reasoning. Mirror

Drawn from "Build Deeper Math Foundations" by T. Spencer Jamieson. Principal September/October 2016.

Web Resources

The **Council of the Great City Schools'** grade-specific parent roadmaps outline math learning goals and games to play. www.cgcs.org/page/244

The **National PTA's** Parents' Guide to Success offers FAQs and activities for both math and language arts. bit.ly/2b5kReJ

Search **Be a Learning Hero's** grade-specific guides for math homework help. bealearninghero.org/learning-tools/homework-help/#results

This resource is brought to you in partnership with the Learning First Alliance, a partnership of education organizations representing more than 10 million members dedicated to improving student learning in America's public schools. learningfirst.org.



LEARNING FIRST ALLIANCE

PARENT RESOURCES



[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
PROFILE.PHP?ID=61556781784403](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556781784403)



[HTTPS://SDSFEC.ORG/](https://sdsfec.org/)



[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
GROUPS/781453261913514](https://www.facebook.com/groups/781453261913514)



[PARENTGUIDANCE.ORG](https://parentguidance.org)



[HTTPS://WWW.PBS.ORG/
PARENTS](https://www.pbs.org/parents)



[HTTPS://
CODINGTONCONNECTS.COM/](https://codingtonconnects.com/)



[HTTPS://SAFE2SAY.SD.GOV](https://safe2say.sd.gov)

OCTOBER 2025

MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FRUIT AND MILK IS OFFERED AT ALL BREAKFAST MEALS

VEGGIE BAR, FRUIT SELECTION AND MILK SELECTION ARE OFFERED AT ALL LUNCH MEALS.

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI



WEEK 6

WEEK 6

BREAKFAST: 1
BKFST SANDWICH
(B)24G/(C)34G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN NUGGETS K-4
DRUMSTICKS 6G 5-12
WEDGES 20G
BISCUITS 24G

BREAKFAST: 2
MINI BAGELS 42G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
F.T. STICKS 38G
H.B. PATTY 15G
SAUSAGE PATTY

BREAKFAST: 3
OATMEAL ROUND 39G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
LASGANA ROLLUP 22G
MIXED VEGGIES 12G
PLAIN BREADSTICK 14G

BREAKFAST: 6
WEEK 1
CEREAL 23G
YOGURT CUP 15G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
BURGER 28G
FRIES 16G

BREAKFAST: 7
FRENCH TOAST
MINIS 36G/37G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
SOFTSHELL TACO 12G/23G
CILANTRO LIME RICE 19G
FIESTA BEANS 17G

BREAKFAST: 8
BENEFIT BARS 47G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN TENDERS
12G/18G
CARROTS 5G

BREAKFAST: 9
CINNAMON ROLL 17G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
GOULASH 52G
CORN 17G
DINNER ROLL 23G

BREAKFAST: 10
MUFFIN 29G-31G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
PIZZA 26G
GREEN BEANS 4G



BREAKFAST: 14
MINI DONUTS 20G-41G
YOGURT CUP 15G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
WALKING TACO 22G/30G
FR. FR. CUP 21G

BREAKFAST: 15
BREAK. BITES 20G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN NUGGETS
13G/16G
CURLY FRIES 23G
SNACK 15-32G

BREAKFAST: 16
WAFFLE STIX 28-37G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHILI 10G
CIN. ROLL 33G
APPLESAUCE CUP 14G
STRING CHEESE 1G

BREAKFAST: 17
BREAD SLICE 45G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CH. ALFREDO 16G/26G
BROCCOLI 5G
BREADSTICK 14G

20
WEEK 3
BREAKFAST:
CARAMEL/CINI MINI 41G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHEESEBURGER 28G
FRIES 13G

BREAKFAST: 21
MINI JOHN 13G
GOGURT 8G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
TATCHOS 16G
CHURRO 25G

BREAKFAST: 22
BREAKFAST PIZZA 27G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
POPCORN CHICKEN 14G
MASHED POT. 20G
GRAVY 4G
DINNER ROLL 23G

BREAKFAST: 23
GRAPE/CHOC. CRESENT
38G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
SCALLOPED POTATOES &
HAM 21G
BISCUIT 24G

BREAKFAST: 24
STUFFED H.B. 24G
YOGURT CUP 15G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
ITALIAN DUNKERS 34G/51G
MARINARA CUP 7G
CORN 17G

27
WEEK 4
BREAKFAST:
MUFFINS 21G-31G
STRING CHEESE
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
HOT DOG 21G
SMILE FRIES 20G
TOTS 16G

BREAKFAST: 28
APPLE FILLED DONUT 33G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
PANCAKE 13G/26G
OMELET
FRUIT JUICE 15G

BREAKFAST: 29
PANCAKE STICK 17G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
BREADED CHICKEN
SANDWICH 44G
BAKED BEANS 30G

BREAKFAST: 30
FRENCH TOAST 37G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN CUBES/GRAVY 7G
MASHED POTATOES 20G
DINNER ROLL 23G

BREAKFAST: 31
BISCUIT/GRAVY 24G
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
PIZZA CRUNCHERS
21G/42G
GREEN BEANS 4G