

JEFFERSON JOURNAL

DECEMBER 2025

- **15th**-Turbak/Stoick's classes performing music at a nursing home
- **19th**- Deutsch/Weber's classes performing music at a nursing home
- **23rd**- 12:20 early dismissal for Winter Vacation
- **24th- Jan 4th**- Winter Vacation- no school
- **Jan 5th**- school resumes

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

A **BIG Thank You** to our PTO members, staff, students and community for your support of our Turkey Bingo. It was a huge success. It was awesome to see so many families enjoying the evening. Thank you to all of our community members who donated prizes and time. A special thank you to the Watertown Shamrocks and Jeremy Herboldt of KXLG for announcing. It was truly a magical night of BINGO!!!

The winter season brings about so much change for us all. The cold temps mean we need to dress warmer. Expectations for outside play means students need to have a winter coat, gloves, hat or hood, snowboots, and snow-pants. To play in the field area or wood chip area, students need to have boots and snow-pants. otherwise, students will remain on the cemented area.

We will go outside if the air temperature is above zero or the wind chill is higher than ten below.

WE ARE ALL

Arrows

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

When we come back from winter break, students will once again be taking the NWEA MAPS assessment. This helps our students gauge progress in math and reading and allows us to re-establish our intervention groups. If you wish for a copy of this report, please contact your child's teacher.

The awesome staff here at Jefferson is grateful to you for sharing your child(ren) with us! We wish you all a Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!!

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. October's winner were:

- 1st- Mrs. Stack
- 2nd- Mrs. Stemwedel
- 3rd- Mrs. Deutsch
- 4th- Mrs. Butler

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!

DR. DANIELSEN'S NOTES

As we get to the time of year when the winter weather is approaching, I am writing this column to remind everyone of how late starts, early dismissals, and no school day decisions are made. It is important that you know, as parents, that your child's safety is my utmost concern. I also want you to know that if you don't agree with my decision, you can keep your child home or come and pick your child up from school early. The best decision possible is made with the weather information that we have – we view several television stations, drive the roads, as well as talk with the National Weather Service.

Late Starts

Late starts are called for two reasons. The main reason is that we need more time to get the busses out on the country roads and we need the daylight for the roads in town and out of town to begin the plowing process. On a normal day, our bus drivers are ready to head out about 6:30-6:45 AM. When we have a 10:30 late start, that delays that time until 8:30 – 8:45 AM. The second reason is to “buy time”, to see if the weather is going to get better and improve to start at 10:30 AM. I know this sometimes causes concern because of day care situations for parents, but I do use the late start time to review the conditions and see if they are going to improve. If they are not improving, then a “no school” decision is made.

Early dismissals

Early dismissals in the winter are primarily called to get students home with inclement weather during daylight hours. We may use a 12:30, 1:30 or 2:30 early dismissal time.

No School – We call no school when either weather is too difficult to get children to school with our busses (typically in town roads are better), and/or the weather is predicted to become worse throughout the day. This decision begins about 4:30-5:00 AM with several of us driving the in-town roads and country roads. It also includes talking with meteorologists in Aberdeen about their predictions for snowfall, winds, etc. We make the best decisions possible, and sometimes the predictions are not 100% accurate.

Cold Temperatures

Regarding cold temperatures: We will not call school off for cold temperatures unless the air temperature gets to the 25 to 30 below mark. Our busses are well heated and will run fine unless it is in that range of air temperature (busses don't feel wind chill). We do keep our buildings open for students when it is cold. Students won't wait outside in the bus lines, playground, etc. on those days. Unfortunately, the television media sometimes plays into the hype of calling off school around the state. You can be assured that we will not bring students to school if we believe they are in danger. If they have to walk to school on those cold days, I would ask that you find neighbors and friends and ask if they can help give your child a ride (please plan ahead). If you believe it is too cold, you can keep your child home. Northeastern SD is one of the coldest parts of the state during the winter and if we called off for the two-three weeks of cold weather we wouldn't be in session any of those days – that is why we use the 25-30 air temperature mark decision. Remember to help your child(ren) dress appropriately for cold weather – hats, boots, mittens, coats.

Dr. Jeff Danielsen

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.**

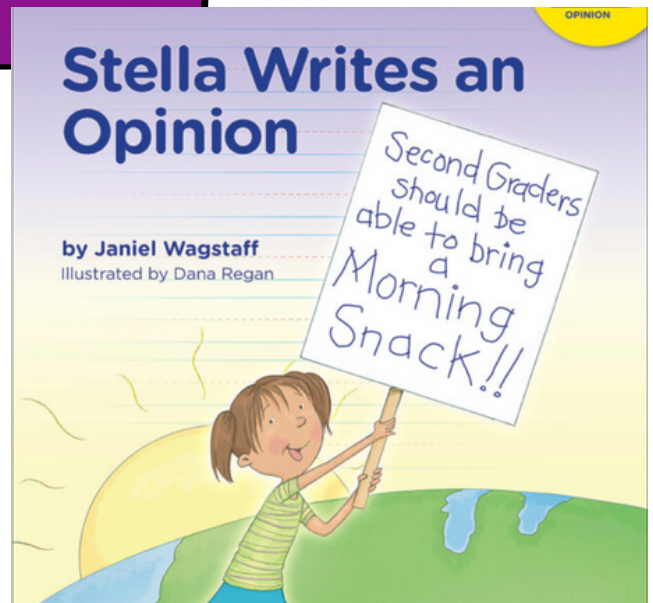
PEANUT SAFE SCHOOL

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.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK OF THE MONTH

Stella Writes an Opinion by Janiel Wagstaff

Stella has an opinion: "Second graders should be able to bring a morning snack!" But stating her opinion isn't enough. She has to support her opinion with reasons, then she has to write a closing to remind everyone why her opinion deserves attention. Reading about Stella's experience as she develops her piece will help guide students as they write about their own opinions. Includes teaching notes at the back of the book.

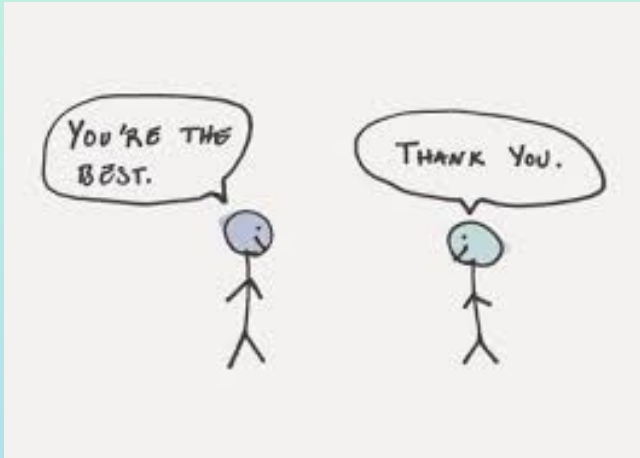




(Nov 24th- Dec 6th)

Accepting Compliments

- 1. Look at the person**
- 2. Use a pleasant voice**
- 3. Say "Thank you"**



(Dec 8th - Dec 19th)

Staying On Task

- 1. Look at your task or assignment**
- 2. Think about the steps needed to complete the task**
- 3. Focus all your attention on the task**
- 4. Stop working only when instructed**
- 5. Ignore distractions and interruptions from others**



During the winter season, it becomes easier for kids to come into contact with germs that cause illnesses like cold and flu. Encouraging healthy habit practices at home—starting with these strategies—is a proactive measure to help ensure kids maintain their health and contribute to the overall well-being of their school communities.

1. Prioritize Nutrition

If you're sending your little ones to school with a packed lunch, try to incorporate a variety of food groups, offering essential nutrients to keep them energized and satisfied all day long. The CDC recommends that children aged 2 and older follow a healthy eating pattern that includes fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, oils, and a variety of protein-rich foods. Try including in-season foods like apples, brussels sprouts, carrots, and pears.

2. Bundle Up

While staying indoors when it's cold is enticing, it's important to get outside when you can. Dress your child in layers to protect them from the cold and use sun protection no matter the temperature outside. Outdoor activities boost physical health and contribute to better sleep and mood regulation.

3. Encourage Proper Handwashing

Handwashing is a fundamental line of defense in preventing the spread of germs. As soon as your kids walk in the door after school, remind them to wash their hands before eating a snack or playing with toys.



If your kids are younger, make it an activity you do together by going to the sink and reminding them that the correct technique for thorough hand cleaning is scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.

4. Refresh Your Disinfecting Routine

Wintertime is a great moment to restock classroom essentials like Lysol Disinfecting Wipes and Lysol Disinfectant Spray. When used as directed, Lysol products kill 99.9 percent of viruses and bacteria. Regularly disinfecting high-touch surfaces like kitchen tables and doorknobs can help cut down on the spread of illness-causing germs.

Find resources and downloadable activities about handwashing and germ transmission at [Lysol Here for Healthy Schools](#).

Report to **PARENTS**

Social media helps people connect, learn, become engaged, and share information. But it also can affect children's mental health and safety. Take these steps to keep your child safe on social media.

Be Cyber Safe

Cyberbullying, hate speech, and harassment are just a few social media-related dangers. Talk to your child about how social media platforms work so they feel safe telling you about their experiences. Ask them what they saw on social media, how they understand what was posted, and how they would respond to various situations they might encounter online.

Limit Social Media Use

Developing brains are especially vulnerable to some social media features. Limit social media use on platforms that include counts of likes or encourage excessive use. Use screen time settings to help your child set limits and learn self-control. Prohibit screen time that interferes with at least 8 hours of sleep a night.

Stay Connected

When your child gets a phone, explain that posts and messages aren't private and often are permanent, which could affect them now and years from now. Inspecting your child's phone will reinforce that what they do on it isn't private and remind them to think through how they communicate before hitting

Social Media Safety Tips for Kids



send or post. You can also link your account to theirs to monitor their use.

Watch for Problems

Consider whether any of these statements are true for your child:

- It interferes with their daily routines.
- They often choose social media over in-person social interactions.
- It prevents them from engaging in regular physical activity.
- They keep using social media even when they express a desire to stop.
- They experience strong cravings to check social media.
- They lie or use deceptive behavior to spend time online.

If you are concerned your child is dependent on social media or using it in unhealthy ways, consider enforcing new limits around accessing it. If you think your child is experiencing psychological harm, talk to a mental health professional to find healthier ways for your child to engage with the digital world.



Counselor's Corner with Mrs. Flemming



Handling the Business of the Holidays: Find Peace in the Season

The holidays can be a magical time—twinkling lights, warm cocoa, family traditions, and joyful gatherings. But for many parents, this season also comes with endless to-do lists, shopping trips, school concerts, travel plans, and a constant feeling of rushing.

When you have young children, it's easy to feel like you're managing a small company called Holiday, Inc. Between making memories and making it all happen, the "business" of the holidays can overshadow their purpose. Here are some gentle, practical ways to slow down, simplify, and rediscover joy with your family this season.

1. Pause Before You Plan

Before diving into the calendar and gift lists, take a few quiet moments to ask yourself: What do I want my children to remember about the holidays? Do you want them to remember a sparkling tree and perfect wrapping paper—or laughter while baking cookies and singing off-key carols? Both can be wonderful, but clarifying your why can guide your decisions and help you say no to things that don't serve your family's values or energy level.

2. Choose Quality Over Quantity

Children thrive on connection, not perfection. They won't remember whether the cookies were homemade or store-bought, but they'll remember that you laughed together while decorating them. Try choosing one or two meaningful traditions rather than trying to do everything. Maybe that's reading a favorite holiday story by candlelight or donating toys together. Focusing on a few intentional activities creates less stress—and more joy.

3. Simplify the Schedule

It's easy for the calendar to fill up quickly this time of year—school events, family gatherings, community performances, and parties. Before saying yes to every invitation, take a look at the big picture. Ask:

- Can we say “no” kindly and still feel connected?

Protecting open, unstructured time helps everyone—especially children—feel calmer and more balanced. Even one quiet night at home in pajamas can reset everyone’s mood.

4. Set Realistic Expectations

It’s easy to get caught up in images of “perfect” holidays on social media or in commercials. But children don’t need picture-perfect moments—they need present parents. If the tree leans a little, or the wrapping paper doesn’t match, that’s okay. Kids notice the feeling more than the details. When you model flexibility and humor, they learn that imperfection is part of real life—and often, the best stories come from those little mishaps.

5. Teach Gratitude and Generosity

The holidays are a wonderful time to nurture your child’s sense of giving. This doesn’t have to mean big donations or elaborate volunteer projects—small acts matter just as much.

Encourage your children to:

- Make cards for neighbors or teachers
- Choose a toy to donate
- Help bake treats for a friend or family member
- Say thank you sincerely and often

These acts remind children (and us!) that the season’s greatest gifts aren’t found in stores.

6. Create “Quiet Magic”

Not all holiday joy is loud or glittery. Some of the most meaningful moments are simple: the smell of pine needles, a candle glowing at dinner, a walk to look at lights, or cuddling under a blanket with cocoa and a story. Set aside “quiet magic” moments where no one is rushing. Turn off the screens, slow the pace, and just be together. Those peaceful pauses often become the most cherished memories of all.

7. Take Care of Yourself, Too

Parents often pour so much energy into creating holiday magic that they forget to rest. Remember: your calm presence is the best gift you can give your children. Make time for things that refill your energy—sleep, exercise, laughter, and time outdoors. Give yourself

grace to do enough, not everything. When you care for yourself, you show your children that balance is part of a healthy life.

A Holiday that Feels Like Home

At the heart of it all, children want a holiday that feels like home: cozy, connected, and filled with love. They'll remember the feeling of belonging far more than any gift or event.

So this year, try to handle the business of the holidays with intention and heart. Choose what matters most, let go of the rest, and give your family—and yourself—the gift of a slower, more peaceful season.



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)

Give Kids a Smile 2026

Watertown area dentists are hosting a
FREE Give Kids a Smile event on
February 6, 2026 for all children ages 0-
18 in Codington and Hamlin counties.
This event focuses on families who lack
dental insurance, Medicaid or the
finances to receive dental care. If you are
interested in signing up for this event,
please contact Trinity at Lake Area
Pediatric Dentistry
(605)753-5437

Deadline for sign- up is January 19, 2026



CONSENT FOR DENTAL TREATMENT HIPAA

I authorize, request, and permit Dr. Thane Evans Crump and any employees under his supervision to perform any and all dental services in order to preserve and restore my child's oral health. Additionally, I authorize the use of medications, anesthetics, nitrous oxide, and x-rays deemed necessary in the course of treatment. I acknowledge the risks inherent in providing dental treatment and that although good results should be expected, the possibility and nature of complications cannot be accurately anticipated and thus no guarantee of results can be expressed or implied. I recognize that during the course of treatment unforeseen circumstances may change the diagnosis of the original condition, which would necessitate an extension of the original procedure or a different procedure.

I am aware that occasionally it is extremely difficult to perform dental treatment on a child due to lack of cooperation, which can be common in very young children and those with mental or physical disabilities. I agree to report any health changes to the dentist prior to each visit.

I authorize the use of radiographs, photographs, and treatment records for the purposes of teaching or scientific endeavors. I also authorize Lake Area Pediatric Dentistry to obtain/share any records from/with other dental or medical offices and educational facilities necessary for the care of my child.

I understand that my child, _____, is **encouraged** to come back on his/her own and recommend that school age children come back on their own, if necessary **one parent per family** is allowed to come back. We ask that parents be silent observers unless we request you to give instruction, this helps prevent confusion for your child.

All siblings must remain in the waiting room and be with a care giver at all times.

We ask that only friendly dental terms be used when discussing appointments with your child.

This consent shall remain in full force until cancelled by either party.

X _____
Signature

Date

In 2003, the federal government implemented procedures (known as HIPAA) to protect the health information of patients. Our office will make all reasonable efforts to protect you and your child's medical and dental information, dental records, and financial information. By signing below you acknowledge that we have publicized our privacy procedures, and you are aware that a copy of such procedures was made available to you. Additionally, you authorize our office to use the information in providing support to other health care providers or financial institutions in order to expedite the law, we are not required to honor requests. If you have further questions you may contact the US Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you.

X _____
Signature

Date

Medical and Dental History Form

Please complete the following form so we may better serve your child

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

Has your child had any of the following? (Please X each box)	Yes	No	Comments & Dates on all Yes
Heart Murmur – If yes, we must have a report from MD			
Congenital Heart Disease			
Asthma, Cystic Fibrosis, Respiratory Disease			
Diabetes, Thyroid, Glandular, or other Endocrine Disease			
Liver Disease, Hepatitis, Jaundice			
Kidney Disease			
Skin, Bone, Muscle, or Joint Disease			
Seizures, Convulsions, Loss of Consciousness			
Cerebral Palsy or Neurological Disease			
Sexually Transmitted Disease or HIV			
Anemia, Hemophilia, other Blood Disorders			
Sickle Cell Disease or Trait			
Cancer			
Speech Disorder			
Hearing Disorder			
Sight or Eye Disorder			
Frequent Headaches			
Mental, Emotional, or developmental Delays			
Autism, ADHD, Genetic Disorder/Syndrome (please state)			
Frequent Infections			
Has your child ever received blood/blood products?			
Has your child ever been hospitalized?			
Has your child ever been seriously ill?			
Has your child ever had a significant injury?			
Has your child ever had surgery?			
Does your child take any medications at this time?			
Is your child allergic.....to any materials?			
.....to any medications?			
.....to any foods, environmental pollutants, animals?			

Are there any other problems, diseases, or medical conditions that we should know about in order to care for your child? __ NO __ YES Please List: _____

Who is your child's primary physician or physician's group?

Name _____ In _____ Phone _____

Has your child had any of the following?	Yes	No	Comments on all Yes
Pain in the teeth			
Swelling of the mouth and face			
Injury to the face or teeth			
A bad dental experience			
Does your water have fluoride			
Does your child thumb suck, or have other oral habits			
Does your child have any other dental conditions			

How often does your child brush? _____ Last Dental Visit _____

Special family considerations of which we should be aware: _____

Responsible Party Information

Child MUST be accompanied by Mother, Father, or Legal Guardian.

Name _____ Relationship to patient _____

Address _____ Home # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date
