

JEFFERSON JOURNAL

JANUARY 2026

- **1st-2nd-** Winter Vacation- no school
- **5th-** School resumes
- **16th-** Second quarter grades are posted. Look on Parent Portal in Campus to see grades
- **19th-** Martin Luther King, Jr Day- no school
- **20th-** PTO meeting at 4:15 at Jefferson
- **23rd-** 12:20 dismissal for inservice

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

Happy New Year! As we complete the first week in January, we complete the 2nd quarter of school. We do not send report cards home anymore. You must access grades through Parent Portal. There will be a report card sent home at the end of the year.

Students will also be participating in their Winter NWEA Benchmark assessment the first two weeks of January. We will be able to see what kind of growth was made in the first semester and examine how we can challenge each student going forward.

Once again, conference sign-up will be coming home the end of January and sent to you via Remind.

As always, I encourage you to read our handbook and communicate with your child's classroom teacher with any concerns.

WE ARE ALL

W
Arrows

MR. DECKER'S NOTES

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Currently our school has a 96.41% attendance rate. Slightly under our average of 97%. Continue to encourage your child to get enough rest, hydrate, and start off each day with a good breakfast. An average of two days missed each month is considered to be chronically absent. At the midway point that would be about ten days. Lessons in school cannot be recreated or made up during normal school time. Absences due to illnesses will be excused IF provided a written doctor's note excusing the absence. PEAs are when a parent calls in and says their child will not be in. This could be that your child is ill. Even if you do not give a reason, this is considered PEA. You have ten days of PEA. After ten we count the days as AU. Once the AU absences start, it is vital that there is communication between the home and principal.

Attendance habits are preparing our kids for the real world and work force. Missing school is missing opportunities to grow and learn. We get kids get sick; illnesses happen.

Do your best to make each day count!

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. Johnson

3rd- Mrs. Deutsch

4th- Mrs. Wietzema

Sincerely,

John J. Decker

john.decker@k12.sd.us

605-882-6390

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.**

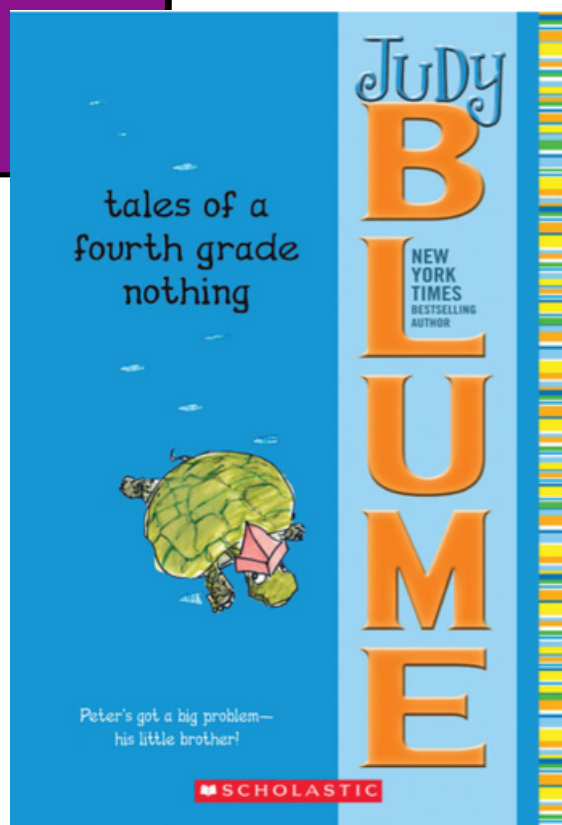
PEANUT SAFE SCHOOL

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

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing- Judy Blume

Life with his little brother, two-year-old Fudge, makes Peter Hatcher feel like a fourth grade nothing. Fudge is actually a tiny terror in disguise, causing mischief everywhere he goes. Whether Fudge is throwing a temper tantrum in a shoe store, smearing mashed potatoes on the walls at Hamburger Heaven, or trying to fly, he's never far from trouble. He's an almost three-year-old terror who gets away with everything, and Peter's had it up to here! When Fudge walks off with Dribble, Peter's pet turtle, it's the last straw. Peter has put up with Fudge for too long. Way too long! How can he get his parents to pay attention to him for a change?





(Jan 5th - Jan 16th)

Asking Permission



- 1. Look at the person**
- 2. Use a calm and pleasant voice**
- 3. Say "May I"**
- 4. Accept the answer calmly**

(Jan 19th- Jan 30th)

Sharing Something

- 1. Let the other person use the item first**
- 2. Ask if you can use it later**
- 3. When you get to use it, offer it back to the other person after you have used it**



Report to **PARENTS**

How to Talk About Mental Health With Children

Families have a powerful role in supporting their children's mental and emotional health at home and at school. Learn signs that your child might be struggling and strategies to talk about mental health with your child.

Signs to Look For

Look for these warning signs that your child might need support:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn;
- Harming or planning to harm themselves;
- Getting into fights;
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to lose weight;
- Having intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities;
- Having difficulty controlling behavior;
- Using drugs or alcohol;
- Having severe mood swings; or
- Exhibiting a drop in grades.

Starting Conversations

Try leading with these questions and actively listening to your child's responses:

- Can you tell me more about what is happening? How are you feeling?
- Have you had feelings like this in the past?
- Sometimes you need to talk to an adult about your feelings. I'm here to listen. How can I help you feel better?
- Do you feel like you want to talk to someone else about your problem?

When talking about mental health problems with your child:



- Communicate in a straightforward manner;
- Speak at a level that is appropriate to a child or adolescent's age and development level;
- Discuss the topic when your child feels safe and comfortable;
- Watch for reactions during the discussion and slow down or back up if your child becomes confused or looks upset; and
- Listen openly and let your child tell you about their feelings and worries.

School Connectedness

When families are engaged in their children's school activities and initiatives, children get better grades, choose healthier behaviors, and have better social skills.

Here are three ways to support your child's mental health and emotional well-being in school and at home:

1. Get involved in health decisions at school.
2. Communicate with your school, letting them know how they can help support your child.
3. Try strategies at home like asking about your child's feelings, focusing on their strengths, and modeling positive coping skills to manage stress, like going for a walk.



Counselor's Corner with Mrs. Flemming



Helping Children Grow: Building a Growth Mindset & Perseverance

What if Success wasn't about Being the Best, but About Becoming Better Every Day?

It's tempting to believe that some children are just naturally good at math, gifted in writing, or born with confidence. But decades of research tell a different story, one filled with effort, feedback, mistakes, and meaningful growth. The most valuable trait a child can develop isn't talent, it's perseverance. One of the most important lessons children learn in elementary school isn't found on a worksheet or test—it's the belief that they can grow, learn, and improve, even when things feel hard. This belief is called a growth mindset, and it plays a powerful role in helping students develop perseverance and confidence.

What Is a Growth Mindset?

A growth mindset means understanding that intelligence and talents can expand and improve over time. Children with a growth mindset believe that:

- Mistakes are part of learning
- Effort helps the brain grow
- Challenges help us get better

When students think this way, they are more willing to try new things, embrace challenges, ask for help, keep going—even when they struggle, and recover from failure.

We see growth mindset when students:

- Keep reading a difficult book instead of putting it down
- Try again on a math problem they didn't get the first time
- Celebrate small victories instead of expecting overnight success

These actions may seem small, but they shape students into learners who are resilient, courageous, and self-aware.

Why Teaching Perseverance Matters More Than Ever

Perseverance is the ability to keep trying when something feels difficult. Learning to read, solve math problems, write stories, or make friends all take time and practice. When children persevere, they build:

- Confidence in their abilities
- Problem-solving skills
- Emotional resilience (ability to bounce back)
- Character by finishing what they start

In a world of quick answers and instant gratification, perseverance is increasingly rare and increasingly essential. Children who can sit with discomfort, delay gratification, and stay focused through trial and error are more prepared not just in school, but throughout life.

Growth Mindset is Built, Not Born

Children don't naturally know how to persevere. It's something they learn through experience, encouragement, and watching the adults around them. It's important to teach children that struggle is part of learning. That mistakes are useful. That effort isn't something to avoid, it's something to value.

How Parents Can Support Growth Mindset at Home

You play a huge role in shaping how your child views learning. Here are a few simple ways to encourage growth mindset and perseverance at home:

1. Praise Effort, Not Just Results

Instead of focusing only on grades or outcomes, try phrases like:

- "I'm proud of how hard you worked."
- "You didn't give up—that's amazing!"
- "I can see you're improving with practice."

2. Normalize Mistakes

Let your child know that mistakes are okay and expected.

- Share a mistake you made and what you learned from it.
- Remind them that mistakes help our brains grow.

3. Use "Yet" Language

If your child says, "I can't do this," encourage them to add "yet."

- "You can't do it yet—but you're learning."
- "That didn't work yet. Let's talk about what might help."

4. Encourage Problem-Solving

When your child feels stuck, guide them with questions:

- "What have you tried so far?"
- "What could you try next?"
- "Who could help you?"

5. Model Perseverance

Children learn by watching adults. Let them see you working through challenges and staying positive when things are tough.

What to do when your child wants to give up

It's natural for children to want to quit when things get hard, but you can help them move through that feeling of discouragement with care and purpose by:

- Validating the feeling. "It's okay to feel frustrated. That tells me this is important to you."
- Staying calm. Your steadiness helps regulate their response.
- Break it down into smaller steps. Ask, "What's one thing you could do next?"
- Offer support, not solutions. "Do you want a suggestion or time to try again?"
- Reflect later. "What did you learn from that?" or "What would you try differently next time?"

These moments shape resilience. Over time, your child will learn that frustration isn't the end, it's the beginning of growth.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FREE THROW CHAMPIONSHIP

The Knights of Columbus organization invites students age 9–14 (age as of January 1, 2026) to participate in the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship to be held at 1:30 PM, Sunday, January 25, 2026 in the Watertown Middle School Gym. Warm-ups and registration will begin at 1:00 PM. Registration is at the event.

Participants will shoot 15 free throws. The foul line for ages 9–11 is 12'. All others will shoot behind the 15' line. All girls, and all boys ages 9–11 will shoot using the girls 28.5" ball. Boys ages 12–14 will shoot using the men's size basketball. Basketballs will be awarded to the first two places in each category.

Contact Nick Kranz @ dnkranz4@gmail.com or (605) 886-7799 for further information.

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

Child Find Notice

The Watertown School District has an ongoing "Child Find" system, which is designated to locate, identify and evaluate any child residing within its geographical boundaries who may have a disability and be in need of Special Education or 504 services. This includes children who are not in school; those who are in public, private, or home school; those who are highly mobile such as children who are migrant or homeless; and those who are advancing from grade to grade, who may need but are not receiving Special Education or 504 services.

The Watertown School District will make sure any child enrolled in its district who qualifies for Special Education or 504 services will be no cost to the parents of the child.

If you know of a child who lives within the boundaries of the Watertown School District, who may have a disability, and may need but is not receiving Special Education or 504 services, please contact Dr. Jennifer Bollinger, Director of Special Services, at 605-882-6398.

"Child Find" activities will continue throughout the school year. As part of these efforts the Watertown School District will use screening information, student records, and basic assessment information it collects on all children in the District to help locate those children who have a disability and need Special Education or 504 services. Any information the District collects through "Child Find" is maintained confidentially.

Notice of Non-discrimination

The Watertown School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Dr. Jeff Danielsen, Superintendent
P.O. Box 730, Watertown, SD 57201
605-882-6312

Derek Barrios, Assistant Superintendent
P.O. Box 730, Watertown, SD 57201
605-882-6312

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, see list of Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforcement offices for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

JANUARY 2026

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



1
NO SCHOOL

2
NO SCHOOL

BREAKFAST: 5
WEEK 5
POPARTS **33G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CORN DOGS **30G**
BAKED BEANS **30G**

BREAKFAST: 6
F. TOAST STICKS **38G**
SAUSAGE PATTY
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN **OR** CHEESE
QUESIDILLA **33G**
H.B. COINS **21G**

BREAKFAST: 7
BAGEL **31G** **OR**
BURRITO **29G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
ORANGE CHICKEN **26G**
FRIED RICE **27G**
FRUIT CUP **21G**

BREAKFAST: 8
PANCAKE MINI **31G/MAX 36G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN TENDERS **12G/18G**
MASHED POT. **20G**
GRAVY **4G**
DINNER ROLL **23G**

BREAKFAST: 9
BREAD LOAF **34G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
SPAGHETTI/MEAT **36G**
GREEN BEANS **4G**
GARLIC TOAST **12G**

BREAKFAST: 12
WEEK 6
APPLE OR CHERRY
FRUDEL **38G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
HOT HAM & CHEESE **29G**
BAKED BEANS **30G**

BREAKFAST: 13
FUNNEL CAKE **38G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
TACO PIZZA **28G**
FRUIT CUP **21G**

BREAKFAST: 14
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: 15
MINI BAGELS **42G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
F.T. STICKS **38G**
H.B. PATTY **15G**
SAUSAGE PATTY

BREAKFAST: 16
OATMEAL ROUND **39G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
LASGANA ROLLUP **22G**
MIXED VEGGIES **12G**
PLAIN BREADSTICK **14G**



BREAKFAST: 20
FRENCH TOAST
MINIS **36G/37G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
SOFTSHELL TACO **12G/23G**
CILANTRO LIME RICE **19G**
FIESTA BEANS **17G**

BREAKFAST: 21
BENEFIT BARS **47G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN TENDERS
12G/18G
CARROTS **5G**

BREAKFAST: 22
CINNAMON ROLL **17G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
GOULASH **52G**
CORN **17G**
DINNER ROLL **23G**

BREAKFAST: 23
MUFFIN **29G-31G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
PIZZA **26G**
GREEN BEANS **4G**

BREAKFAST: 26
WEEK 2
CERAL BAR **29G**
STRING CHEESE
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
GRILLED CHICKEN **28G**
BAKED BEANS **30G**

BREAKFAST: 27
MINI DONUTS **20G-41G**
YOGURT CUP **15G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
WALKING TACO **22G/30G**
FR. FR. CUP **21G**

BREAKFAST: 28
BREAK. BITES **20G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHICKEN NUGGETS
13G/16G
CURLY FRIES **23G**
SNACK **15-32G**

BREAKFAST: 29
WAFFLE STIX **28-37G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CHILI **10G**
CIN. ROLL **33G**
APPLESAUCE CUP **14G**
STRING CHEESE **1G**

BREAKFAST: 30
BREAD SLICE **45G**
M.S/H.S.
VARIETY ITEMS
LUNCH:
CH. ALFREDO **16G/26G**
BROCCOLI **5G**
BREADSTICK **14G**