



Fort Calhoun Community Schools use an automated system to notify families of emergencies or weather-related closings. Most of the schools' information is now sent by electronic means. It is imperative that all contact information for parents/guardians is up to date. Contact your child's school with any new or updated addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses or text information.

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH  
FEBRUARY 2025**



# The Fort Dispatch

Volume 34 No 7

Fort Calhoun Community Schools

February 2025

**FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

**The "Snow Day" Decision**

What goes into the decision to call off school, release early or start late. A "snow day" is a relative term as we have canceled for extreme cold, ice, and we even canceled a day two years ago for extreme wind. How do I come to this decision? There are many moving and intertwining parts. I will try and walk you through the process.

1. Local news channels will issue a weather alert day or notices for extreme weather. You are now put on alert for what might be.
2. If the inclement weather develops, superintendents and other local officials are contacted by the National Weather Service (NWS). Twenty-four to thirty-six hours ahead of the storm they will begin sending out powerpoint updates every four to six hours. It just depends on the severity. If severity increases, they will do a webinar with the latest updates, usually about six hours ahead of predicted storm.
3. Armed with this information it becomes a waiting game of sorts. Surrounding superintendents are in direct contact with each other and relay thoughts on what they may decide. Two scenarios develop at this point based on the confidence of the NWS predictions. If confidence is high and the storm is tracking, you will see schools cancel early. If confidence is not as strong you will see superintendents delay to see what develops. There is a domino effect as well. Once a school cancels and then another you will start to see more go. I am on a thread with seven other surrounding superintendents, some of those are on threads with schools closer to them. Communication happens well into the night and into the early morning. I am well informed about what is happening all around us.
4. Keep in mind some schools don't do a late start. Other schools are locked into contracts with bus companies who may choose not to run their buses.
5. In-district information comes from the head maintenance person and me, who each drive the roads to get an idea of conditions. This happens usually between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. depending on the timing of the storm. We are also in contact with the county to get their view on the roads, especially the gravel roads. Then I make the best possible, safest decision I can.

There are many more scenarios that could be played out here, but this is a snapshot of what goes into the decision. At the end of the day, it is about getting students and staff home or here safely. This decision is never made lightly. So, as we enter February, it is my hope we are done with making "snow day" decisions. (But probably not)

Jerry Green  
Superintendent  
Fort Calhoun Community Schools.



February 17th



#OurHearts Together 2025

**WELCOME TO FORT CALHOUN**

Our community is growing and we want to be prepared for future needs.

Please help us with your household information by reporting any adults and children up to 18 years old. If you have not already notified us through the census (card below) or there has been a change in your household, call the District office at 402-468-5591 with your information.

FORT CALHOUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
DISTRICT CENSUS RECORD

Resident: Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Residence Address: (if different) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hrs/Wk \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Adults Living at Same Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ For Office Use Only: \_\_\_\_\_ Census ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME OF CHILDREN: (3rd to 21 Years) \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH: (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ID# \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTION ENROLLMENT 2025-26**

The Option Enrollment application period for the 2025-26 school year is now open through March 15, 2025. Forms are available on our website or at the school offices. The School Board sets class size and program parameters then applicants are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. According to State law, all applicants must be notified one way or the other by April 1st.

**TITLE IX INFORMATION**

Fort Calhoun Community Schools Board of Education's Policy 3057 addresses all areas of discrimination. This policy can be found on the schools' website fortcalhounschoools.org. Go to "About, Board of Education, Policies" and scroll down to Policy 3057-Title IX.

**COMMUNITY WEIGHT ROOM USE**

The high school weight room is available for use by District patrons. A fob is issued for a fee of \$50.00 at the high school office. The fob renews yearly each June 1st. If you have any questions contact Jamie Schleifer at 402-468-5591.

Visit our website at [www.fortcalhounschoools.org](http://www.fortcalhounschoools.org)



Fort Calhoun Community Schools are currently accepting applications for 2025-26 for 5th Grade and Elementary Art teachers. Apply through Applitrack on our website under, About, Job Openings, and follow the instructions. Applications will be taken until the positions are filled. Subject to a veterans preference. EOE

Mr. Schleifer  
Asst Principal-Activities Director

Pioneers,

Activity Updates:

- Girls/Boys Basketball:
  - o The Girls and Boys basketball teams competed in the NCC Tournament the week of January 27th-February 1st. Both teams had competitive opening rounds of the tournament. The boys lost a heartbreaker to Arlington and the Girls found a way to grind out a win over Syracuse! The tournament will conclude with girls playing on the final day at Logan View. The boys hosted and beat Conestoga on Thursday, January 30th.
- Girls/Boys Wrestling:
  - o Both wrestling teams competed in the NCC tournament at Fort Calhoun on January 25th. I would like to thank all of the volunteers and our coaching staff for making this a great event! Both teams finished 3rd place and we had a number of medalists!
    - Girls: Champion - Beckah Gossman, 2nd Place - AnnaRae Hartline, Aundrea Gutierrez, 3rd Place: Anna Leigh McLaughlin, Kendall Magana-Torres, Ali Dill, Lydia Kmita
    - Boys: 2nd Place - Lucas DeMilt, Merritt Olberding, 3rd Place - Presley Olberding, Levi Lasher, Tyler DeMilt, Nathan Duros, 4th Place - Alex Schuler
- Cheer/Dance:
  - o Our Cheer Team travels to Grand Island for State competition on Friday February 22nd.
  - o Dance team travels to Orlando Florida for UDA Nationals on January 29th-February 3rd. They then have a quick turnaround for State Dance on February 21st in Grand Island.

Unified Basketball:

Our Unified Basketball team will compete against Arlington on February 4th, between the varsity basketball games. They will travel to Bennington on February 5th for a 12:30 game. They will finish the season in a tournament at UBT on February 27th.

Thank you,

Jamie Schleifer  
Assistant Principal/AD



**Post Prom Benefit Dinners**  
Tuesday 2/4 Chili Feed  
Thursday 2/13 Lasagna Dinner  
High School Commons 5-8 PM  
During the Girls/Boys  
Basketball Games



**Hello to our Fort Calhoun Families and Guardians!**

I hope you have stayed safe and warm throughout the first few weeks of 2025. Staff and students haven't wasted a minute diving into curriculum and picking up where they left off before winter break. Teachers have been looking through our winter testing scores to know and understand how to best meet the needs of our elementary students.

With parent teacher conferences right around the corner, it's an excellent opportunity for families to engage in meaningful discussions about student progress and goals. At that time, teachers will be sharing student winter testing scores with you. We are eager to continue to connect with you to support each student's learning journey. As always, we are grateful for your continued support and involvement in making our school a vibrant and nurturing environment for everyone.

Wishing you all a fantastic month ahead!

~Mrs. Horstman

#### **Bus Behaviors & Expectations**

- The expectation on the bus is students must remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear while the vehicle is moving; are prohibited from throwing or passing objects on, from, or into vehicles; not be loud or boisterous; avoid talking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion. We encourage frequent reviews of these expectations with students at home to ensure the safety of our all students while riding the bus.
- You can also help keep our students safe by ensuring students get in and out of vehicles on the curbside. Please remind your child to utilize the side of the vehicle that is closest to the school sidewalk when entering or exiting a vehicle.

#### **Reminders**

- Morning breakfast ends at 8:00 am. Make sure your child is arriving to school with adequate time to eat, so they can start their learning when the school day begins at 8 am.
- If your child has alternate pick up plans after school, please contact the office so the message can be relayed to the classroom teacher. It is also helpful when you send an additional message through SeeSaw to the student's teacher.
- Information regarding closing/cancellation/postponement of schools and activities will be announced over the following Local TV Channels (KETV 7, WOWT 7, KMTV 3, KPTM Fox 42) and radio stations (KFAB 1110). The automated phone alert system is also activated to call families and listed contacts.
- **Please refrain from parking in the bus lane until after the buses have left school property.**
- Students will be going outside if the temperature is 15 degrees or higher. If the temperature is under 15 degrees (ex. 14 degrees) the students will have indoor recess. Please ensure that your student is coming to school with the appropriate cold weather gear so they are warm during outdoor recess. If you need assistance with finding cold weather gear for your student, please contact Mrs. Horstman.

#### **Upcoming Events**

- January 31st - Preschool Screenings from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm
- February 6th - The Countywide Spelling Bee - 9 am @ the High School
- February 14th - 20th - FTC Elementary Book Fair
- February 15th - Father/Daughter Dance
- February 19th & 20th - Parent Teacher Conferences
- March 7th - Donuts with Mom

#### **3rd Quarter PBIS student Celebration**

The PBIS team would like to share students' goals for school-wide expectations for the 3rd quarter. While we continue to plan for our next INCREDIBLE event, we are keeping the details a secret. Here is the criteria students are working towards:

- Students (PK-1st) with 3 or less PowerSchool logs (which includes bus write ups) will get to attend the PBIS student recognition event.
- Students (2nd -6th) with 8 or less demerits (which includes bus write ups) will get to attend the PBIS student recognition event



Preschool registration will take place from February 1-March 1, 2025. More information is available on our website. The next Parent Advisory Committee will be April 9, 2025 3:15PM - Preschool Room at the Elementary.

**MR. NICK WEMHOFF**  
Principal

Over the course of the next month and a half, we will begin to prepare our Junior's for the ACT. Using test strategies and test prep questions provided by the ACT, we will begin to practice questions to give exposure to test questions students may see on the ACT. It is important to us that we give all our students the best possible opportunity to maximize their ACT scores. ACT scores can have an enormous financial impact on the future of our students who decide to attend a two or four-year college. Every high school junior student across the state of Nebraska is required to take the ACT this spring. The test date for Fort Calhoun is set for Wednesday, April 2nd; please make sure you mark your calendar.

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th at the Junior-Senior HS. Parents are invited to stop in and see teachers between 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm. Detailed information regarding Parent-Teacher conferences will be coming soon.

*"Your success and happiness lie in you."*  
Helen Keller

*PFE News*



Pioneer Families -

Happy New Year! The PFE has been busy planning for the Father Daughter dance. We anticipate light snacks and a DJ as the Fathers and their Daughters dance the night away in Candy Land! We are finalizing details on the mother son event that we will share soon. We are excited for a great semester with many fun events to finish the school year. See below for upcoming events.

- 2/15 - Father Daughter dance
- 2/17 - February PFE Meeting
- 3/7 - Donuts with Mom
- 4/25 - Spring carnival
- TBD - Mother/Son Event
- TBD - Golf Fundraiser
- TBD - Original Works

Your 2024-2025 Office Team: Liz Springer - President; Sara Nichols - Vice President; Krissy Jorgensen - Treasurer; Raschelle Drumheller - Secretary; Amy Evanich - Communication Coordinator

The PFE also has information on the school website under Community Organizations.

**February Happenings**

- 2/1 Preschool Registration Begins  
UNO Honor Band and Choir
- 2/6 County Spelling Bee @ Fort Calhoun High School
- 2/9 TeamMates Bingo @ HS Commons 12:00 PM
- 2/10 School Board Meeting
- 2/14 H♥ppy V♥lentine's D♥y
- 2/14-2/19 Book Fair @ Elementary School
- 2/18-19 Girls State Wrestling
- 2/19 Parent Teacher Conferences @ Both Schools 2-8 PM---Early Out
- 2/20 Parent Teacher Conferences @ Elementary Only-- Early Out at Both Schools
- 2/21 No School
- 2/21-22 Boys State Wrestling
- 3/1 End of Preschool Registration
- 3/2 Spring Sports High School Parents' Meeting
- 3/4 Winter Band Concert
- 3/6 Jr-Sr High Choir Concert
- 3/15 Option Application Period Ends



The Blair *Enterprise* has released it's "9 Who Shine" for this year. Fort Calhoun students selected are **Alex Schuler, Anna Mallory and Harper Tjardes**. Students are chosen for their academics, activities, and community involvement to name a few. A special section of the paper will showcase them.

Junior High Local Spelling Bee winners are **Christina Bach-Winner; Ella Dworak - Runner-Up**. Elementary Local Spelling Bee winners are **Claire Heneger-Winner, Sam Richardson-Runner-Up**. They will compete in the County Bee at Fort Calhoun high school on February 6th. Congrats!!!

This is the season for Honor Bands and Honor Choirs. The Honor Band selections for this year are **Hastings--Connor Holmstedt, Addie Benoit, Cody Rogers and Aaron Melville; UNO Honor Band-Connor, Addie, Cody, Aaron, Michael Maxon and Steven Bryan; and the UNL Winter Winds Honor Band-Connor**. In addition to the Honor Bands, **Conner Holmstedt** has become an **Honor Band All Star** as he will study with the principal clarinet player of the Omaha Symphony Orchestra prior to the UNL Honor Band.

Vocalists chosen for Honor Choirs are: **Nebraska Middle School Honor Choir--Kamryn Adams, Josh Allen, Kaelyn Bryan, Haylie Erisman, Oliver Geiger, Gabriella Muse and Paxtyn Wagner; Hastings Honor Choir--Ava Bittner, Haley Conner, Alex Fienhold, Natalie Lammers, Riley Lingle, DeLloyd Robertson, Samantha Thomas and Stella Wilmes; Wayne State Honor Choir--Ava, Haley, Alex, Natalie, Riley, DeLloyd, Samantha and Stella**.

**Kaylee Taylor** was chosen to play in the Nebraska Coaches Association All-Star Softball game on July 21, 2025. **Lucie Larsen** has signed at Midland University to play softball.

Both wrestling teams competed in the NCC tournament at Fort Calhoun on January 25th. Both teams finished 3rd place and we had a number of medalists! Girls: **Champion - Beckah Gossman, 2nd Place - AnnaRae Hartline, Aundrea Gutierrez, 3rd Place: Anna Leigh McLaughlin, Kendall Magana-Torres, Ali Dill, Lydia Kmitta Boys: 2nd Place - Lucas DeMilt, Merritt Olberding, 3rd Place - Presley Olberding, Levi Lasher, Tyler DeMilt, Nathan Duros, 4th Place - Alex Schuler**

Congratulations to our Scholastic Writing participants! The following students were awarded Silver Keys for their writing: **Emma Bowery, Sammie Ladwig, De Robertson, Alex Schuler and Ashleigh Walls**. These students won Honorable Mention for their writing: **Taylor Doucheay, Connor Holmstedt, Sammie Ladwig and Aiden Tinkham**.



A group of sixth grade HAL students competed at the state level of the Future City Competition, a competition that tasks students in grades 6-8 to think about what cities would be 100 years from now. This year's theme was "Above the Current". Students were to design a floating city and provide two innovative examples of its workings and how it keeps its citizens healthy and safe. The group spent several weeks working after school and an additional Saturday morning. They then presented their city to a panel of judges. The team included **Thomas Jensen, Korbin Kesteloot, Cheyenne Lake, Isla Muse, Quinn Hallberg, Sam Richardson, Levi Bowen, Geno Roberts and Abram Benoit** who brought home an award for "Best Moving Part."