

Welcome

BACK TO SCHOOL

2024

TAKE A LOOK AT HOW THE STUDENTS OF YOUR
COMMUNITY ARE GROWING IN SCHOOL!

Crete
Dorchester
Exeter-Milligan
Friend
St. James - Crete
St. Paul - Plymouth
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The Crete News

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Students come first

CPS begins school year with new strategic plan

Crete Public Schools are beginning the year with a new strategic plan aimed at making sure all students are on the path to graduation.

"The plan is flexible and direct in helping us achieve our one - but mighty - goal: ensuring all students meet the comprehensive set of indicators included in the CPS Profile of a Graduate," said Dr. Joshua McDowell, superintendent of schools.

The strategic plan, titled "Students Come First: An Outstanding Journey," introduces the vision and mission of the district:

Vision: An outstanding journey

Crete Public Schools provides a meaningful and rigorous experience for students, staff, and families, ensuring an outstanding educational journey for our entire school community.

Mission: Stay connected

Crete Public Schools embraces challenges with high expectations. By prioritizing engagement, collaboration, and effective communication, we empower students, staff, and families



with opportunities to learn and grow, enriching their lives and our community.

The schools' two priorities for this year are instructional excellence and continuous school improvement.

Instruction will be improved by emphasizing the Marzano elements for teaching effectiveness, providing pro-

fessional development, coaching teachers on data-driven strategies, providing feedback and support, and developing administrators as instructional leaders.

In addition, CPS will establish a systematic, high-quality school improvement process.

Paramount to the success of the strategic plan are what McDowell called the Cardinal Five:

- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Instructional Excellence
- High Quality Communication and Family/Community Partnerships
- Effective Data Use
- Continuous School Improvement

"The objectives and strategies in the plan came directly from the data collected via a comprehensive needs assessment," McDowell said. "We want our students, staff, families and community to know where we are going and know that we have a plan to get there."

The emphasis on instruction and improvement this year will help not only students but also staff keep learning and growing. That will provide them the greatest opportunities for success in a rapidly changing world.

Specific priorities for next year and beyond will be identified as the strategic plan rolls out.

"All the work in the plan is important," McDowell said. "However, we want to ensure our staff know where we are headed, have autonomy within the plan to get there and don't become overwhelmed. This is why we will take it one priority at a time."

Building on a strong foundation

New principal Sarah Sell loves her role at Crete Elementary

As a teacher, Sarah Sell loved getting to know the students in her classroom, but she loves knowing all the students in the school even more as Crete Elementary principal.

"I loved having a class, but being able to work with and know all the students is so rewarding!" she said.

Sell previously taught first and second grades at Crete for four years. Her 18 years as an educator have also taken her to Houston, TX, Beaver City and St. Paul. In Grand Island, she taught and served as an instructional coach before returning to Crete as principal four years ago.

"I also love that I get to work with all the teachers," Sell said. "Teachers are incredible professionals, and I learn

something from each teacher in our building when I watch them teach."

Crete Elementary has accomplished much in the past few years, and Sell hopes to take the school even further this school year.

"My goal is to build on all the great work that we have done and make things even better," she said. "I also hope to build more relationships with our staff, students and families."

Sell's own family includes three children, Nolan, Lucas and Olivia; and her husband, Eric, who teaches at Crete High School. When she's not at school, you can find her spending time with family, attending Husker sporting events, reading or working out.



A place students want to be

Intermediate principal Shannon Cole pledges to maintain strong culture

Crete Intermediate School's new principal is a familiar face with decades of experience in education.

Shannon Cole taught fourth grade for two years when she first came to Crete and served as assistant principal for six years before moving into the school's top chair. During her 20 years in education, she's also taught elementary school and coached softball and basketball. Coaching teachers is a big part of her job.

"I love working with teachers and helping them grow from year to year," Cole said. "The best part about my job is working with the students and staff at Crete Intermediate. It's a special place

with amazing people, and I enjoy coming to work every day."

Cole plans to set goals through the continuous improvement process and work hard to accomplish them.

"My goal as a first-year principal is to continue to build a strong culture and make Crete Intermediate a place where students want to be, staff choose to work and families want to connect," she said.

Family, sports and the outdoors take up much of her personal time.

"I have four nieces and two nephews with whom I spend a lot of time," Cole said. "I spend a lot of time watching sports and attending sporting events."

She also likes to camp, hike and fish.



New Teachers

New teachers at Crete Public Schools for the 2024-25 school year include, from left: (first row) Paul Heusinkvelt, Kenna Piskorski, Kyra Creamer, Alexis Parks, Cassandra Warnell and Cody Buescher; (second row) Brent Cain, Cassidy Buescher, Josie Vyhnaelek, John Kucera, Makena Lindblad, Macy Scott and Miriam Nieto Lopez; (third row) Rebecca Lawson, Betsy Brandt, Kylie Meinke, Brittany Sunneberg, Tawni Myers, Jennifer Parker and Whitney Wendelin; and (fourth row) Brody Mueller, Madilyn Taylor, Caitlin Bell, Melinda Velecela, Heather Gonzalez, Megan Dubois and Alexis Carbajal Romero.

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Sophomores take first classes in pathways



Cardinal ACADEMIES CRETE

A concept conceived to make students successful and productive in life beyond high school is showing progress of its own. In its second year, the Cardinal Academies program has sophomores taking their first courses in their selected pathways. The district is also reaching out to area businesses for job shadowing opportunities and internships.

A career academy is a smaller learning environment within a larger high school. It has a career and college theme preparing students for post-secondary schooling and work.

This year's sophomores began the program last year in the freshman academy, discovering the different

"We had fewer freshmen fail courses because of the support we have in place for them."

Cory Bohling
Crete High School principal

pathways Crete High School offers. Pathways are like college majors that students choose based on their interests.

Sophomores were able to choose from the Technical Sciences academy and the Business and Human Services

academy.

In addition to preparing students with career and skill sets for their future, Cardinal Academies will also produce outcomes such as increasing daily attendance and graduation rates.

"It is too early to see the impact of our pathways," Principal Cory Bohling said. "However, we noticed last year that there was a positive impact on freshmen grades and credits earned. We had fewer freshmen fail courses because of the support we have in place for them."

When the academies enter their third year, students will gain a deeper understanding of their career field, and the community will see them at job sites for hands-on learning.

Crete Public Schools shows progress over five years

Academically, Crete Public Schools has seen notable growth, as shown through state assessment data released in November. The district had one school classified as "excellent," two as "great" and one as "good." The district overall was rated as "great."

"It's exciting to see how much improvement we've made as a district," said Brittany Hajek, chief academic officer.

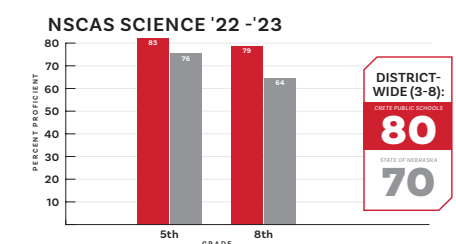
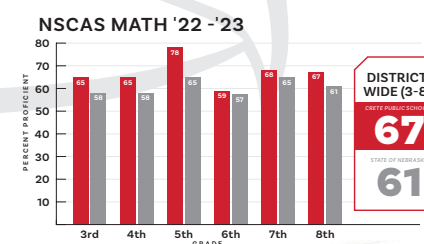
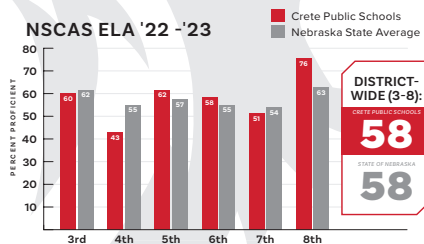
The percent of CPS students proficient in 2018-19 in ELA, math and science were, respectively, 47%, 51% and 77%. In 2022-23, they were 58%, 67% and 80%. Those numbers equaled or outpaced the state averages, which were ELA, 58%; math, 61%; science, 70%.

"Our teachers have doubled down on planning high-quality, standards-based instruction," Hajek said. "They also work so well together to look at the data on each individual student and develop cross-curricular plans to move kids along."

In individual grade levels and class cohorts in third through eighth grades, CPS did well compared to state averages. For instance, with 76% proficiency in eighth-grade ELA, the district topped the state rate by 13 percentage points.

Eighth-grade science teacher Jeff Starman has noticed the improvement in ELA at the middle school. ELA teachers have spent many hours developing curriculum and adopting resources that best fit their students' needs.

"The new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) require more reading and require students to use evidence to support claims," Starman said. "I know that this is a large part of reading and writing instruction, and I have seen students' ability to use evidence to support claims increase in my classroom."



Touring Colleges? Register for a Visit Day.

- October 16 - Music
- October 19 - Homecoming
- October 29 - Future Teacher
- October 30 - Social Sciences & Humanities
- October 3 - Art
- January 22 - We Build Leaders Symposium
- April 11- Sophomore/ Junior



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Student life

Growing the whole child — as well as the whole family — has progressed, thanks to a number of initiatives within Crete Public Schools.

Eight new athletic programs have been added. They include high school boys tennis, girls wrestling, unified bowling and unified track; and middle school boys soccer, girls soccer, girls wrestling and boys and girls cross country.

“In the two years that we’ve offered soccer, spring sports participation went up over 60% at the middle school,” Activities Director B.T. Kracl said. “We firmly believe it helps our students stay engaged in the school community.”

At the high school, Activities Director Matt Martin said new sponsor Kelli Zimmerman had her FCCLA students write letters of thanks to their teachers on Education Day in February.

“New FFA sponsor Olivia Merza has spent a lot of time helping students discover their interests in ag by showing them how fun agriculture can be,” he said. “Her goal is to gauge student interest in order to offer them opportunities they would benefit from.”

The large number of boys and girls going out for wrestling led the high school to find additional practice space at St. James School.

The high school weight room received a \$100,000 investment funded in collaboration with the Crete Athletic Booster Club, and in the 2024-25 school year, Crete High School will add a strength and conditioning instructor.

Outside regular school hours, Cardinal Community Learning Centers (CCLC) continue to narrow the achievement gap by offering an enriched learning environment where students are supervised, safe and fed, thereby supporting local working families.

“Additionally, CCLC’s nearly 20 family engagement events each year foster community engagement and enhance student enthusiasm as they strengthen family bonds,” Site Coordinator Chelsea Sidel said.

Over the past five years, the Adult Education program has experienced an 18% increase in the number of individuals served. The program responded by expanding the number of classes and increasing staff.

“The positive impact on parents and families is evident, as those participating in Family Literacy reported increased feelings of being informed about Crete Public Schools, understanding their roles as parents and partners in their children’s education and strengthening their connections to the community,” said Ryan Hinz, director of adult and family education.

This has also been the first year with a licensed mental health practitioner on staff at Crete Public Schools.

“I have been welcomed to this school district and have joined with partners to provide a safe and secure school environment while serving the mental health needs of our students,” said Michael Renner, LMHP.



Staff development and leadership

Teachers and administrators have grown professionally over the past five years, thanks to the many leadership development and staff support opportunities Crete Public Schools offers.

“The district provides ongoing professional development for administrators focused on strengths-based leadership,” middle school Principal Perla Jaimes said. “There are also opportunities for staff to enhance their abilities and take on leadership roles within their respective departments.”

The district fosters a collaborative environment where teachers and administrators can mentor and support one another, encouraging the exchange of ideas and best practices. Mentors are empowered to contribute to the school community and to share their expertise with others.

“There are also many committees that teachers can be a part of,” first-grade teacher Tricia Hintz said. “As part of the committee, they can help make decisions about curriculum for our school or even school improvements.”

For the past 20 years, CPS has offered teachers the opportunity to help manage summer school, essentially serving as the principal of their building for the summer.

“The district provides ongoing professional development for administrators focused on strengths-based leadership.”

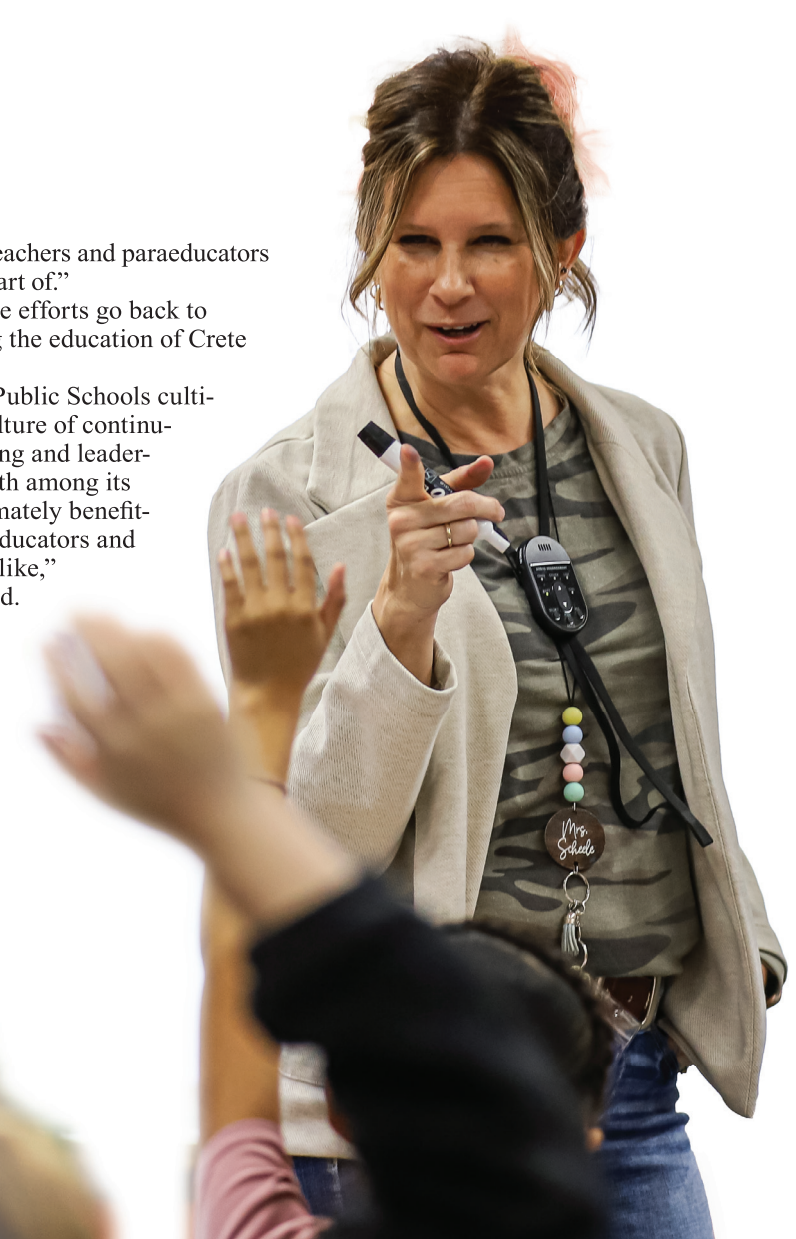
Perla Jaimes
Middle School Principal

“Within grade-level teams, there are also positions of leadership for a teacher. Each team has someone who represents them in all the core curriculum areas, going to meetings and reporting back,” Hintz said. “Within the building are Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), leadership and social commit-

tees that teachers and paraeducators can be a part of.”

All these efforts go back to enhancing the education of Crete students.

“Crete Public Schools cultivates a culture of continuous learning and leadership growth among its staff, ultimately benefiting both educators and students alike,” Jaimes said.



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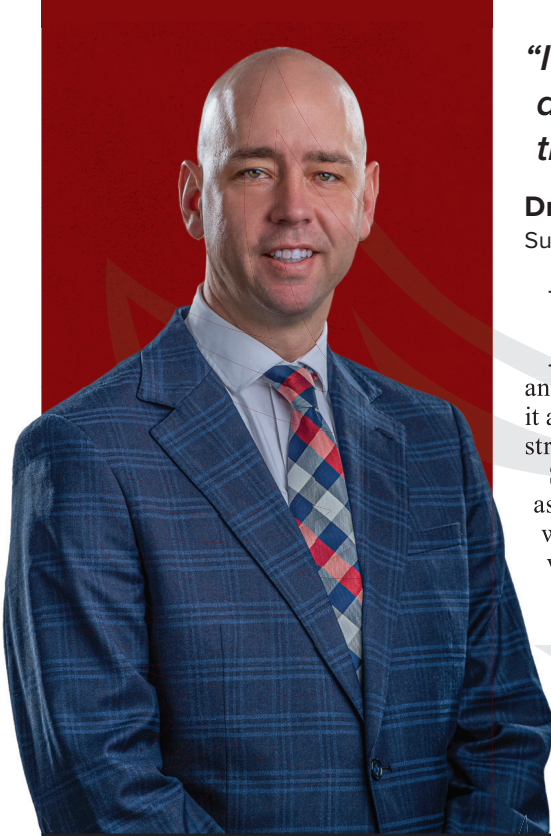
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"It's ok to be where you are, you just can't stay there."

Dr. Josh McDowell
Superintendent

I've said this since the day I started at Crete Public Schools. I said it about our students, our staff and our district as a whole. I've said it about myself, too. It is something I strongly believe in.

So when I look at where we were as a district five years ago and where we stand today, I'm incredibly proud we didn't stay where we were. We moved forward, no matter the obstacle. We've improved. We've shown growth. We've done things the right way - both in the classroom and the boardroom - and the proof is in the results.
From a leadership perspective,

we have invested in putting systems in place that support the work in our classrooms. We are focused on our teachers teaching each student. Our staff has consistently proven we can do hard things on behalf of our students.

Students remain the purpose of everything we do. Whether it's our Cardinal Community Learning Centers, our First Flight youth activities, our Adult Education program or our growing student academic offerings, we're constantly analyzing what we do for kids and how we can improve.

The results? The percent of CPS students proficient in 2018-2019 in ELA, Math, and Science were, respectively, 47%, 51%, and 77%. In 2022-2023, they were 58%, 67% and 80%. CPS equaled or outpaced the state average in all three categories this year — the state numbers: ELA, 58%; Math, 61%; Science, 70%.

Those numbers certainly show growth. And it's ok to celebrate where we are now. But we just can't stay there.


Crete community, the work isn't done. We need your help. As we develop the Cardinal Academies, your involvement isn't helpful, it's crucial.

I love the trust you show in our district, but the experiences we want to provide our students require collaboration and partnerships like we have never seen before. Business and industry leaders, parents, and community volunteers - you are all going to be called upon to make sure when I write this letter in another five years, we will be just as proud to say we didn't stay where we are today.

And we will only have done so if we work together now.


The Crete community never ceases to amaze me. Knowing we don't have to provide these experiences alone reminds me how thankful I am to live in a community that steps up in big ways.

Data from 2022-2023



DISTRICT ENROLLMENT
2,230

- English Learners29%
- Free/Reduced Lunch..... 61%
- Gifted10%
- Special Education..... 14%
- Highly Mobile 5%
- College-Going Rate65%



ATTENDANCE RATE:
93%
STATE AVG: 93%

GRADUATION RATE:
89%
STATE AVG: 87%

CLASSIFICATIONS

EXCELLENT Crete Intermediate School	GREAT Crete Elementary School Crete Middle School	GOOD Crete High School
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STAFF

- Teachers.....143
- Master's Degree70%
- Avg. Years Teaching..... 10.9

COST PER PUPIL:
\$15,038
STATE AVG: \$15,082

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THE WOLF PACK IS BACK!

New Teachers



Jarod Belden is the new fifth-grade teacher at Exeter-Milligan.

Sandra Snyder is the new high school math teacher at Exeter-Milligan.

Pack Partners

Pack Partners is a program that was started during the 2017-2018 school year. Pack Partners is a pairing of high school students with elementary students who meet once a month to take part in a number of fun activities together. These activities include crafts, games, read-alouds, scavenger hunts and more. This program has allowed younger students to meet and interact with older students so that they have a positive role model within the school district. Juniors and Seniors can choose whether they would like to participate as a pack partner or not.



Mikey Bartu and Aidan Vavra read *Who You Were Made to Be* by Joanna Gaines to help reinforce Character Strong traits during Pack Partner time.

Exeter-Milligan TIMBERWOLVES



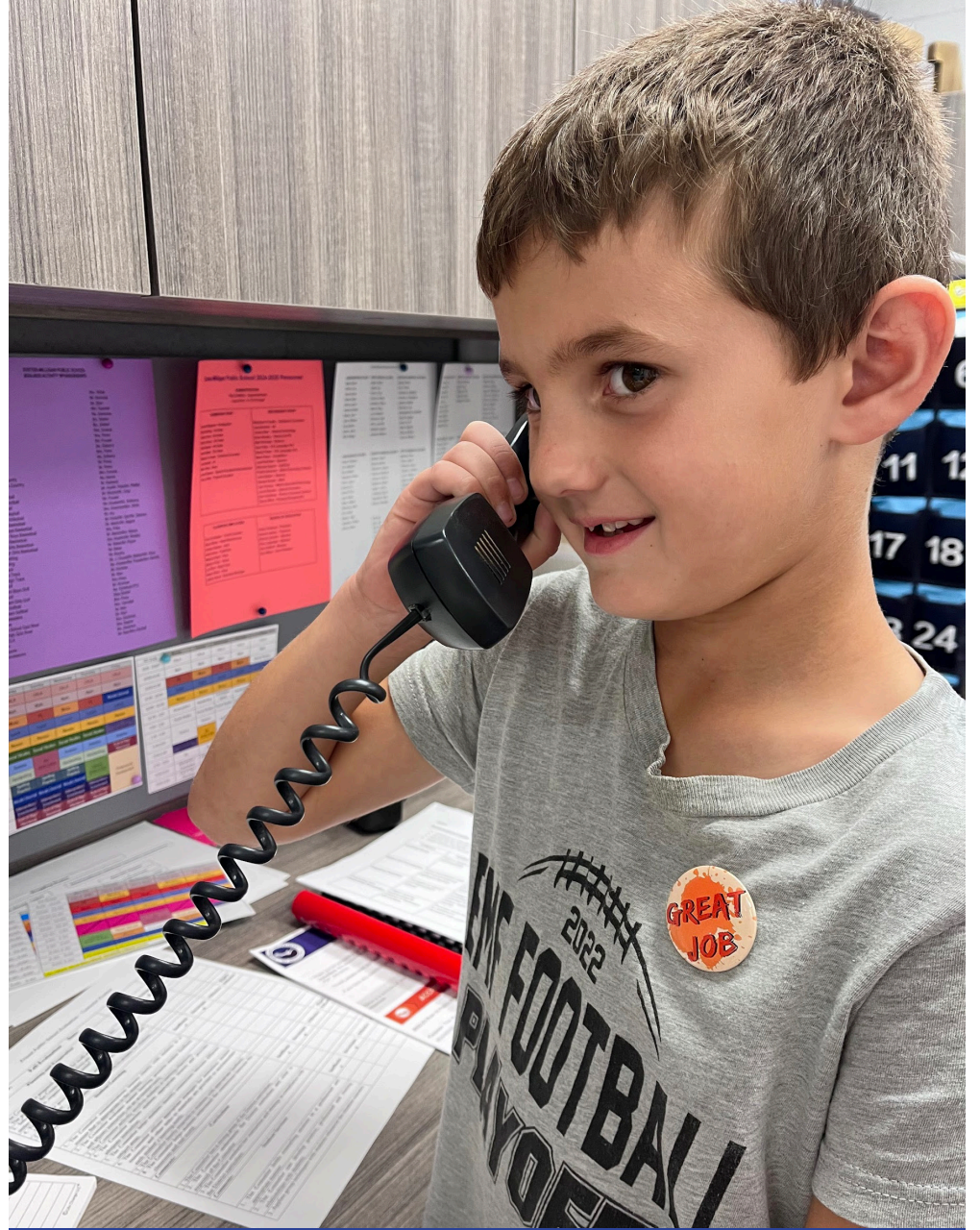
Exeter Lumber LLC
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Lumber

Character Strong

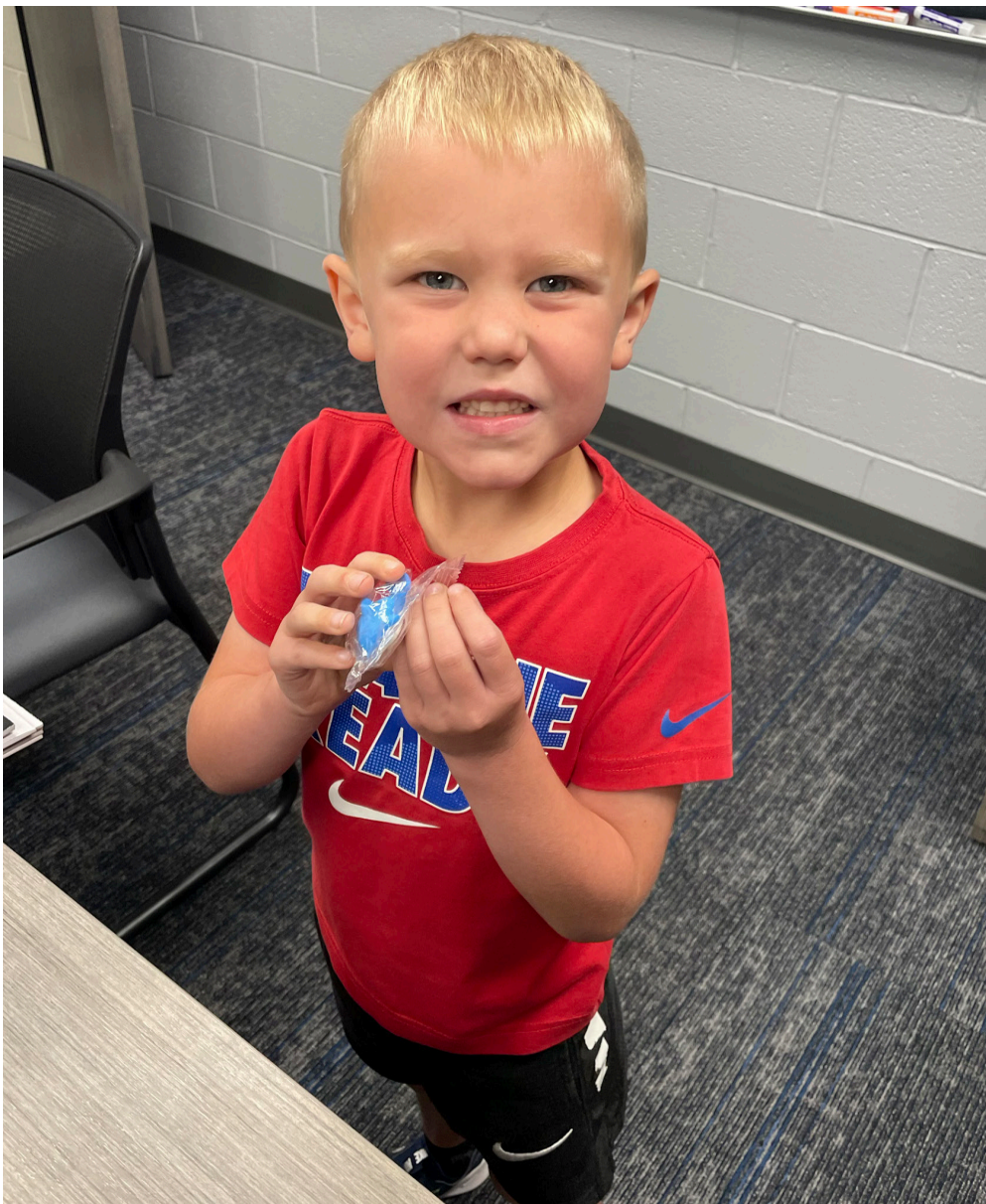
This school year, Exeter-Milligan has adopted a comprehensive, evidence-based, multi-tiered program called Character Strong to support life-readiness and the success of the whole child. This program is being implemented within the K-5 classrooms. The K-5 students have been focusing on respect during the first weeks of school. We have been learning about what bullying is, how to stop it, how we can support our friends, and the right way to report negative behaviors. Everyone loves the new curriculum, and we enjoy the songs, books, and lessons on how to keep our school a positive place!



The kindergartners are enjoying the new Respect song we get to listen to during Character Strong lessons.



Barrett White followed the weekly focus of showing respect in his second grade classroom and earned a Good News Notification, which means he was able to go to Mrs. Kroll's office to receive a pin and call one of his parents. He chose to call mom.



Dax Bohlken receives a high five for following directions, which shows great respect in the classroom. He is able to visit Ms. Fousek, the EM guidance counselor, to choose a desk pet.



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BULLDOG STRONG

Welcome Back Bulldogs!

Our theme this year is: "Every New Beginning Comes From Some Other Beginning's End." At Friend we are off to a great start for the 2024-2025 school year. This year we are celebrating all of the memorable moments that make up Friend Public School as this is our last year as a district. In August 2025 we will consolidate with Exeter-Milligan and become Exeter-Milligan-Friend Public School.

We are rounding out the first quarter, and during this quarter we have had a lot of fun and learning going on at Friend! Staff appreciation dinner, Student leadership summit at Peru, Apply to College day with Senior information sessions, very well attended Parent teacher conferences, Blue River Cohort, staff trainings, fall assessments, fall sports/activities, and we are in new Bulldog Buddy groups this year. We look forward to an outstanding 2024-2025 school year!



New Teacher
Jerratt Bradley
Position: Fifth grade
Extracurricular activities: Assistant coach middle school girls' basketball
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Eudora, Kansas
College: University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Hobbies: Puzzles, cooking, exercise



Family Engagement Night
 On September 26th, we hosted a family engagement night for our 5th-12th grade families and students. During this night we learned about Healthy relationships and communication, mental health and wellness, physical health and wellness, and social media information. We had a free meal provided by the Friend Booster Club and enjoyed each of the sessions that were provided.

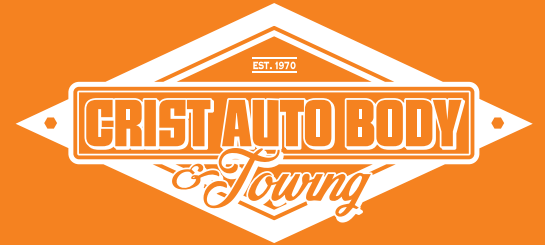


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Dorchester LONGHORNS



HORNS UP!

New Teacher

Olivia McBeth

Position: K-12 vocal and instrumental music teacher
Previous Experience: This is my first year teaching.
Originally From: Wilber
College: Doane University
Family: Joshua Johnson (fiance), two siblings in Lincoln, Ian and Natalie
Hobbies: Sing, play my instruments, arts and crafts, baking and crocheting



Olivia McBeth is the new music teacher at Dorchester Public Schools.



Junior Briana Tellez poses in the Longhorn Mascot costume during the Fall Sports Preview and Volleyball Scrimmage on August 22.

First Day of School



Kindergarten students participate in a bus evacuation drill on the first day of school. Pictured here is the kindergarten class with their classroom para Mrs. Persson (L), and Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Schindler (R).



Students in grades K-5 gather in the auxiliary gym before the first day of school. The auxiliary gym received a facelift over the summer with new mats on the walls and a Longhorn painted above the stage.

Patriots Day Program



Seniors Owen Vyhnaek (left) and Baylor Behrens deliver patriotic speeches at Dorchester's Patriot Day Program on Sept. 11, 2024.



Members of the American Legion salute the flag during the singing of the National Anthem. Pictured left to right: Junior Bailey Theis, Deputy Jennifer Warning with the Saline County Sheriff's Office, Ray Rezabek, Matt Bolton, Judy Vyhnaek, and Loren Vyhnaek.



Dorchester students in grades 4, 5, and 6 sing at the Patriot Day Program under the direction of Music Teacher Ms. Olivia McBeth.

Students in Mrs. Schindler's kindergarten class display family trees they made during the first few weeks of school.



Longhorn Line-Up

Students at Dorchester School participate in "Longhorn Line-Up," monthly meetings of mixed-age groups with the purpose of building community, character, and family. Throughout the year, students participate in various activities such as writing letters to veterans and to the elderly, learning about Red Ribbon Week, and participating in character building activities. For the first Longhorn Line-Up of the year, students talked about their interests and decorated Longhorns to display in their teachers' rooms.



Ms. Schutte's Longhorn Line-Up group. Pictured left to right: Jorge Reyes, Araceli Garcia Bernabe, Ryan Killinger, Ava Bergmeyer, English Teacher Ms. Audrey Schutte, Madysin Steuk, Harvey Thalken, Chase Tachovsky, and Alexa Reyes.



Mr. Wiese's Longhorn Line-Up group. Pictured left to right: Dorchester Principal Mr. Jake Wiese, Jonathan Hernandez-Pena, Ian Turquiz Vazquez, Lainey Warning, Mahayla Hetrick, Brynleigh Harney, Wilder Thalken, Chloe Schweitzer, Bailey Theis, and school bookkeeper, Jen Feeken.

Activities

The Pride of Saline County! Dorchester Marching Band, under the direction of Ms. Olivia McBeth, finished third place in Class D at Yorkfest on Sept. 7, 2024.



Look out! The Lady Longhorns are coming to get you! The varsity volleyball team poses for a picture. Pictured left to right: Micaela Loarca, Savannah June, Lily Lehr, Gabby Theis, Baylor Behrens, Mackenzie Yager, Atley Zoubek, Livia Schweitzer, and Emilia Perez.

The Dorchester Football team is pictured here with Head Coach Brent Zoubek (L) and Assistant Coach Spencer Kotas (R).



Photos courtesy of Sharon Axline.



Mr. Sullivan's Longhorn Line-Up group decorates their Longhorns on the gym floor. Clockwise from top left: Myles Vyhnaek, Jesse DelToro, Amelia Mae Slama, Mr. Brandon Sullivan, Grayden Easley, Sullivan Smith, and Joshua Gordon.



Go Big Red! Students in grade 10 visited the University of Nebraska, Lincoln campus to learn more about attending college. Front row left to right: Mackenzie Yager, Livia Schweitzer, Briana Tellez, Lily Lehr, Emilia Perez, Senaida Tercero, Sandra Ventura. Back row left to right: Mason June, Colton Harrison, Javier Munoz Ballona, Michael Maldonado, Benji Beckley, Jonathan Hernandez Pena, and Ellie Ralston.



TROJAN PRIDE



New teachers at Tri County Public Schools for 2024-25 include, from left, Rebecca Meagher, Jaime Copenharve, Julia Graff, Maureen Halama, Chelse Hornbacher and Stefanie Petsche.

New Teachers

Jamie Copenharve

Position: Physical education 7-12

Extracurricular activities:

Assistant volleyball coach

Previous Experience: Student

taught at Beatrice Middle School

Originally From: Omaha

College: Peru State College

Hobbies: Spend time with my dog (Boomer). I also love reading.

Julia Graff

Position: Agricultural education

Extracurricular activities:

FFA advisor

Previous Experience: Student

taught in Kansas

Originally From: Hanover, Kansas

College: Kansas State University

Hobbies: I enjoy spending time at the farm doing various activities,

as well as spending time at Milford Lake.

Maureen Halama

Position: K-12 vocal music

Previous Experience: PK-12 vocal

music at Meridian; K-12 vocal music

at Wilber-Clatonia; 6-12 band at

Fairbury

Originally From: Wilber

College: Doane University

Family: husband Jon

Hobbies: I enjoy reading,

gardening, spending time with family and friends, collecting Hull pottery and playing polka music in several polka bands.

Chelse Hornbacher

Position: Secondary English

Extracurricular activities: Fall

play/one act, speech

Previous Experience: Student

taught in Axtell. This is my first year

as a teacher.

Originally From: McCool Junction

College: University of Nebraska at

Kearney

Hobbies: Reading, crochet, playing

card/board games and going for

walks

Rebecca Meagher

Position: Fifth and sixth grade

science and social studies

Previous Experience: Taught fifth

grade at Beatrice Public Schools

Originally From: Taylor

College: University of Nebraska-

Lincoln, bachelor's in elementary

education; Peru State College,

master of science in curriculum and

instruction

Family: husband Steve, children

Megan, Autumn, Matthew and

Aaron

Hobbies: I like to golf and travel

with my family, especially to National Parks.

Stef Petsche

Position: K-6 Title teacher/student

services director

Extracurricular activities:

Previous Experience: Special

education para for nine years at

Norris; early child hood special

education teacher at Norris for five

years and second grade special

education for one year

Originally From: Ewing

College: undergrad at UNK and

graduate (admin degree) at Wayne

State College

Family: husband Josh of 17 years,

son Brayson, 15, daughter Briella,

10

Hobbies: I love to go for walks, try

to walk 5-6 miles a day, and I love to

shop.

Back to School at Tri County Elementary

As the school year is in full swing at Tri County Elementary, I'm excited to share what an incredible start we've had! Our students, staff, and families have made this year truly special, and I couldn't be more proud to be part of this amazing community. We recently wrapped up our Homecoming Week, which was a huge success! The students had an absolute blast participating in our dress-up days, the ATV/golf cart parade, and the all-school pep rally. The enthusiasm and school spirit were contagious, and it's moments like these that remind us of how lucky we are to be part of such an outstanding elementary school. Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) has also been hard at work, organizing some fantastic events for our students and families. Coming up in the first week of October, the PTO is hosting the annual Book Fair and launching cookie dough sales. We are so grateful for the tireless support and creativity of our PTO, and we thank them for all they do to enhance the experience for our students! I'd also like to take a moment to encourage all parents, grandparents, and family members to join us for lunch with your child(ren). It's a wonderful opportunity to see the students in their daily environment and be part of the school community in a fun and meaningful way. I always like to showcase our kindergarten class in this back to school edition. This year we have 32 incredible kindergarteners starting their educational journey. Thank you to our incredible students, staff, parents, and supporters for making the start of this school year so fantastic. We look forward to all the exciting events and learning experiences still to come! Go Trojans! TC PRIDE!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATE: October 15th Flu Shot Clinic at school for students





PANTHERS ON THE MOVE

142 Years of Panther Enrichment

St. Paul's Lutheran School in Plymouth is in its 142nd school year of offering Christian education to church and community members. St. Paul's currently has a PreK-8th grade enrollment of 93 students being served by 7 different teachers as well as several other hired staff members and classroom aides. Our 2024-2025 school year theme comes from Ephesians 6:10-18 - "Put on the full armor of God."

Markers of academic excellence include a 9-year standardized testing average of 74th percentile, 66% of students landing on the honor roll, and strong showings at annual math competitions, spelling bees, and fine art fairs. Our teachers are adept at making lessons engaging, challenging, and differentiated. Our classrooms take several field trips each year including to Homestead National Monument, Lincoln Children's Zoo, and Arbor Day Farms.

St. Paul's has a strong athletic program where upper grade students can compete in volleyball in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track in the spring. Our students have numerous musical opportunities including choir, piano, ukulele, recorder, music theory, and an annual spring musical/play. St. Paul's takes advantage of numerous opportunities to get our students involved in the community including caroling, a Thanksgiving food drive, writing letters to shut-ins, and Arbor Day projects.

Contact us today to find out more information about St. Paul's and how we prepare students for this life and the next!



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WE ARE WOLVERINES

New Teachers

Rachel Dente
Position: 6-12 art
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Henderson
College: Nebraska Wesleyan University
Hobbies: Painting, journaling

Erika Fuentes
Position: High school Spanish
Originally From: Crete
College: University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Family: Married to Ander Fuentes and have two daughters, Leilani and Everlee
Hobbies: I like to cook and attend church.

Maloree Graf
Position: Middle school
Extracurricular activities: Junior high volleyball, junior high girls' basketball, yearbook
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Alma
College: Concordia University
Hobbies: Photography, walks, golfing, attend sporting events

Korrina Harris
Position: Kindergarten
Originally From: Virginia
College: Liberty University
Family: Spouse Kevin, one daughter
Hobbies: Enjoy time outside, gardening and traveling

Sydney Havel
Position: Second grade
Extracurricular activities: Junior

high volleyball
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Hebron
College: University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Hobbies: Paint, sand volleyball, go on walks

Steve Huls
Position: Resource
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Blue Springs
College: Doane University
Family: Jackie; children Jackson Coby and Cooper
Hobbies: Fishing, being outdoors

Steve Jirsa
Position: Choir/general music
Extracurricular activities: Show choir
Previous Experience: Meridian 3 years, Madison 15 years, Dorchester 6 years
Originally From: Dorchester
College: undergrad Peru State, grad school Wayne State
Family: Wife Tricia, daughter Mackenzie, son Ashton
Hobbies: Trapshooting, golf

Kayla McDougall
Position: Life skills
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: DeWitt
College: WGU
Family: Josh, Mya and Owen
Hobbies: Read a book

Abbey Meyer
Position: 6-12 social studies
Extracurricular activities: Student



New in the teaching ranks at Wilber-Clatonia Public Schools for 2024-25 are, from left: (front row) Maloree Graf, Abigail Meyer, Korbyn Moldenhauer, Korrina Harris, Erika Fuentes and Kayla McDougall; and (back row) Ben Myers, Steve Huls, Rachel Dente, Sydney Havel, Mikala Schroeder and Steve Jirsa.

council
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Geneva
College: Nebraska Wesleyan University
Family: husband Trevor Meyer
Hobbies: Hiking and baking

Korbyn Moldenhauer
Position: Elementary school counselor
Originally From: Wilber
College: University of Nebraska at Kearney
Hobbies: Going on walks, concerts, volleyball and traveling

Ben Myers
Position: 6-12 PE and health
Extracurricular activities: Assistant high school football and

girls' basketball
Previous Experience: First year
Originally From: Seward
College: Concordia University
Hobbies: I enjoy being outdoors. Hunting and fishing are my favorite things to do.

Makala Schroeder
Position: Kindergarten
Previous Experience: Taught in Lincoln Public Schools for 10 years
Originally From: Atkinson
College: Nebraska Wesleyan University
Family: spouse Ethan, daughter Payten
Hobbies: Gardening, cooking and baking, spending time with family and sprint car racing







ALL THE SAINTS

St. James Continues to Shine

St. James School has been a vital part of Crete's history since the first classes were held on Sept. 5, 1887, with 46 children. Our school takes its title in honor of the apostle James who was one of Christ's closest friends and the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred.

Today, St. James School is a Pre-K through 6th grade Catholic elementary school. It has close to 100 children and boasts of a joyful and dedicated faculty and staff including four Sisters from the community of the School Sisters of Christ the King. Classroom sizes averages 12 children per room. The goal of St. James School is to provide an education in wonder, wisdom and virtue enabling students to know and follow Christ and live a happy life for all eternity. St. James School emphasizes the liberal arts accentuating religion,

history, literature, math, science, music, art, and physical education. Having a heritage of beauty and value to receive, the students memorize the best of poetry and prose, strengthen their powers of observation through nature studies, and sharpen their reasoning skills through classroom discussions, debates, and mathematical logic. Playing musical instruments, participating in skillful physical activity, and praying daily adds nobility to the children's characters.

Perhaps the best description of St. James School is to be found in their scholar's pledge which the children recite each day.

Parents interested in an elementary education in the Catholic tradition of wonder, wisdom, and virtue should contact Sister Mary Alma at St. James School.



The St. James School Scholar's Pledge

I pledge to seek the truth
and to love all that is good and beautiful.

I will strive to achieve clarity of thought,
nobility of character and purity of heart.

I will pursue my education with diligence,
humility and sincerity, embracing
excellence and renouncing mediocrity.

I will treat my teachers and peers
with the utmost dignity and respect.

I will honor myself and my family
by giving my best effort daily.

I will honor God
by developing the gifts He has given me
to the best of my ability.

Above all, I will aspire to the wisdom
of a life lived in faith, hope and charity,
fulfilling my destiny as a child of God.



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Good Luck Students!
¡Buena suerte estudiantes!

Nosotros hablamos español