

## 5th Grade Rocks the Elementary Christmas Concert!



The annual Friend Elementary Christmas Concert was performed the last week before Winter Break, and it was an excellent show! Students in Kindergarten through 6th grade got the opportunity to show off all of the hard work they've put in throughout the semester in Music and Band to their families and friends! The performance was extra special for the 5th graders, who were only just choosing their instruments this August. From learning to make a sound, to learning notes, to putting it all together for full songs, we are all very proud of how far they've come in such a short amount of time. The 5th graders are excited to continue improving their skills in both Band and Music. We hope you join us for more amazing concerts in the future!

A resolution to last a lifetime:

READ

*From Superintendent Anderson*

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and instant access to information, the age-old habit of reading appears to be waning. For centuries, reading has been a cornerstone of intellectual development, cultural exchange, and personal growth. Yet, in today's digital age, traditional forms of reading — particularly books, newspapers, and long-form articles — are experiencing a notable decline. While there are many reasons for this, my goal is to challenge readers of this article to make reading a priority.

In my last 10 years of education, I have watched as students and adults alike are engaging less in reading. With a decline in critical reading (and reading in general) has come a decline in writing capabilities and overall critical thinking. As a school district, we continue to combat this issue. We are offering solutions in the name of a new curriculum and encouraging and urging teachers and students to read more. However, now I turn to the community and ask for your help and support.

In my 5 years of teaching psychology, there were many times that I learned right along with the students as new information continued to emerge. Information on brain development and cognitive function was constantly changing with new studies. Among all the pieces of information that continued to flow through my class was one that has stuck with me to this day as an educator. ***Children observe what is important to their family and community based on what they see in mass.*** Translation: if a child sees mostly screens as they develop in the early years, they learn to value and appreciate those screens above other objects. If children are exposed to an endless supply of books at home and through libraries on a regular basis, they will learn to value and appreciate books. This could be said for other things that could be valued at home such as food, clothes, animals, or cars. Looking around your home right now; what tangible items reflect you and your family's morals and priorities?

As a whole, all of these things can be appreciated and enjoyed. However, I write this being very concerned as an educator with the overall national decline in reading. Childhood reading continues to be strong, but as students transition to more challenging texts and informational texts, the love seems to be lost. This is not just a Friend/EMF problem; it is a national issue.

I have read articles that have cited college professors who are appalled by the lack of students being able to critically read informational texts as well as shutting down when presented with an article that is only a few pages long. This is a critical issue. If our future leaders are not readers, then how will we have new ideas and find solutions to problems in the world? When we look at our leadership in this country, readers are the ones leading. If we don't produce readers for the future, what kind of leaders will we have?

As we have begun the process of consolidation, it will be my goal to promote reading and literacy. While answers are in short supply on this issue, it is my goal within the walls of the school to promote reading and critical thinking and continue a push all the way through graduation. The solution is simple: read more. But HOW do we encourage and require that in our schools when reading is competing with so many other distractions?

I urge all of you with students in your life to not only talk about reading but model it as best you can. Start small. No one is asking you to read Tolstoy or Nietzsche. However, we all as a community need to model reading for a better future for this country, Nebraska and the small towns we are working to save.

As we begin 2025, many of us have New Year's resolutions. My resolution is both personal and professional. Reading, writing and critical thought will be my focus. It may end up being a resolution that lasts the rest of my life. My hope is that you will join me in this resolution and positively change the direction of our community and our students and, by doing so, the future.



Our EMF One Act's season has come to an end, but first, shout outs to our District Outstanding Performances!

These six cast members have now been honored twice at competitions! ★★

From left to right: Logan Krupicka, Tucker Svec, Kiley Oldehoeft, Caleb Black, Kierra Papik, Kmila Benitez

## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

**Parents/guardians of seniors who are college bound -- scholarship season is officially here! Please have a conversation with your child about these items:**

- Has your family completed the FAFSA? (Consider contacting Education Quest for assistance.)
- When was the last time the student checked the "Scholarship Central" link on the school website? (AT LEAST once each week is recommended.) This is just a FRACTION of the scholarships available. See below! ↓
- When was the last time the student visited "Scholarship Quest" on the Education Quest website? New opportunities may appear each week or even daily!
- Has your student identified three to five people who can be solid scholarship references or writers of recommendation letters?
- Has your student completed and turned in any of the local scholarship applications that are already available?
- Has your student scheduled time to see Ms. Hottovy for help with any of the above?

**Parents/guardians of juniors:**

Preparation will soon begin to help our juniors be prepared to take the ACT on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. In 2016, the state of Nebraska mandated that state testing at the high school level be completed through a college entrance exam, and the ACT was selected. Our students will take the Reading, English, Math, Science, and Writing portions of the ACT.

Results from the ACT will be used for state reporting, plus numerous colleges and universities grant academic scholarships based on ACT scores.

### **Important Dates for Juniors**

- January 28 – take the practice ACT with Ms. Hottovy
- Friday, February 21 – 1st ACT prep session with Kevin Hermeling from ACT-Now
- Monday, March 17 – 2nd ACT prep session with Kevin Hermeling
- Tuesday, March 25 – take the ACT (with writing)
  - Parents/guardians of juniors – watch your mail for more information from Ms. Hottovy regarding the ACT!

Juniors are also encouraged to schedule one college visit some time during the second semester. As long as required paperwork is turned in on time, this is an excused absence from school. Students should contact Ms. Hottovy for any questions or help needed with this process.

### **For ALL Parents**

One of the skills we encourage all of our students to learn and use is to ask for help when needed. What better way for our children to learn this skill than to see the adults in their lives ask for help when they need it, too.

The website "Your Life Your Voice" is an excellent resource for parents, families, and children in times of need. Check it out here: [Your Life Your Voice](#)

Another important thing we can do for our children is focus on how to help them foster confidence without being too hard on themselves. And sometimes life is just difficult! Take a look at these online resources from Child Mild Institute.

- [12 Tips for Raising Confident Kids](#)
- [How to Help Kids Who Are Too Hard on Themselves](#)
- [Kids Who Need a Little Help to Make Friends](#)
- [13 Ways to Boost Your Daughter's Self-Esteem](#)
- [How to Build Boys' Self-Confidence](#)



**Every New Beginning Comes  
From Some Other Beginning's End...**



Hello Parents and Students,

Happy New Year and Happy 2025! What a fun, fast, and furious first semester we have had at Friend Public School! Here is what has been happening at FPS in the past two months:

- We had a successful state yearly safety audit
- The elementary kids went to the Doane Leadership Day
- We learned about fire safety from our amazing Friend volunteer fire department
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Graders opened a bank!
- We had students from Doane University and UNL come and visit our school!
- The EMF 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students went to a UNL Sportsmanship pep rally
- Our Preschool-12<sup>th</sup> grade students/families collected thousands of items for the Friend Food Pantry
- Our girls golf team went to state and had two girls (Abbie Milton and Abby Klooz) place!
- Our Volleyball team was D-1 State Runner-Ups!
- The academic pep rally we do two times a year (December and May) was a success with many K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students getting honored for test scores, most improved, positive behavior, and attendance!
- And lastly, if you have been to a basketball game you've seen our new mascot "Baxter the Bobcat" running around and shooting hoops!

You can see now why I said, "fast and furious." So many great things are going on at FPS, and all of our students and staff continue to make us proud daily! Here's to another great semester!

Liz Stutzman- PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade Principal

**Upcoming Dates:**

**January 8<sup>th</sup>: School Resumes**

**February 26<sup>th</sup>: 12:30 release and PT conferences from 1:00-7:00 PM**

**February 28<sup>th</sup>: No School**

EM FCCLA PRESENTS

5TH QUARTER  
GLOW IN  
THE DARK  
DODGEBALL

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

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DODGEBALL WILL START AFTER THE  
BASKETBALL GAMES AND LAST FOR 2  
HOURS

GRADES 7-12 WELCOME  
PLEASE BRING A CANNED FOOD  
ITEM FOR ENTRY!

**Jacob Yocum and Marshall Wells with the night stands they built in Woods Class.**



**EMF Speech Schedule (dates/times/locations may change):**

<b>High Plains at Polk</b>	<b>January 18, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Thayer Central at Hebron</b>	<b>January 25, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Shelby-Rising City</b>	<b>February 8, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Pioneer Conference at Lewiston</b>	<b>February 12, 2025</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Meridian</b>	<b>February 15, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Sutton</b>	<b>February 22, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>McCool</b>	<b>March 1, 2025</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>EMF Speech Showcase 7pm at Exeter</b>	<b>March 4, 2024</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>District C2-1 at McCool Junction</b>	<b>March 17, 2025</b>	<b>Monday</b>
<b>Class C2 State at Kearney High School</b>	<b>March 27, 2025</b>	<b>Thursday</b>

The EMF FFA Chapter has just wrapped up a busy and successful fall. Below are the results from our Leadership Development Events held in Seward on December 11th. We had several state qualifiers and we are proud of everyone's efforts.

**Creed Speaking-** Reese Tuttle blue, 26 total speakers

**Ag Literacy-** Valerie Spohn 3rd place blue; Ava Svehla blue, 9 total speakers

**Discovery Speaking-** Brynnlye Johnson red; Liam Capek red; Crosby Oldehoeft white; 19 speakers

**Jr. Public Speaking-** Abby Klooz 3rd place **Qualified for State**; Gracie Vyhnaek purple; 27 speakers

**Sr. Public Speaking-** Kmila Benitez 3rd place **Qualified for State**; 17 speakers

**Cooperative Speaking-** Abbie Milton 5th place purple; 12 speakers

**Natural Resources-** Babe Weber 3rd place **Qualified for State**; 16 speakers

**Employment Skills-** Keila Ricenbaw purple and finalist; Mikey Bartu purple; Brett Kalhoff blue; 40 speakers

**Ag Demo-** Mason Vossler, Ashley Braun and Zach Vossler purple and finalists; Cohen Harre and Jayden Capek blue; Brooklyn Oldehoeft, Sydney Engert, Selah Petersen blue; 21 teams

**Conduct of Chapter Meetings-** Ty Svehla, MaKenna Burchett, Meredith Paulsen, Miley Ricenbaw, Dane Anderson, Deacon Erdkamp, and Keisyn Kirchhoff 4th place purple and state alternate; 12 teams

**Parli Pro-** Team 1 - Will Vyhnaek, Chase Paulsen, Hunter Svehla, Zach Spohn, Reagan Bartley, Ella Archer 5th place purple; Team 2 - Aniston Meints, Sophie Weber, Alexis Paulsen, Cheyenne Krupicka, Malorie Lawver, Avery Tuttle 4th place purple and state alternate; 17 teams

In January, the officer team will be taking the gift cards up to UNMC to donate to kids awaiting organ donations in the hospital. This is a really important service project to our community and chapter. There are several donation sites set up in banks in Milligan and Exeter. Both schools have donation boxes, and the Freckled Door in Friend also has a donation box. We are looking for gift cards to donate. Places that are popular are Amazon, Target, Starbucks, Scooters and other numerous food places. If you have any questions or would like to make a donation, please reach out to Mrs. Segner or Mrs. Kohtz.

We hope that everyone has a great holiday season and new year.













# JANUARY Breakfast & Lunch Menu

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
		1	2	3
<b>SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE DUE TO AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN PRODUCTS</b>		<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
6	7	8	9	10
<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>Donuts</b> Chicken Nuggets French Fries Sandwich Bread <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Breakfast Pizza</b> Mandarin Orange Chicken Rice Bread/Butter <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Pancake Bites</b> Stuffed Crust Cheese Pizza Green Beans <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>
13	14	15	16	17
<b>Egg Cheese Omelet</b> Hamburger/Bun Sweet Potato Fries <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>French Toast</b> Walking Taco Shredded Cheese Bread/Butter <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>Breakfast Pizza</b> <b>Bacon, Egg, Cheese</b> Hot Turkey Sandwich Corn Bread/Butter <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Breakfast Bar</b> Sloppy Joes Doritos Brownies <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>Biscuits &amp; Gravy</b> Fiestada Spanish Rice Churro <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>
20	21	22	23	24
<b>Pancakes</b> Chicken Bacon Ranch Flatbread Corn <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Egg Patty</b> Mini Corn Dogs Potato Smiles <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Chocolate Chocolate</b> <b>Chip Muffins</b> Chili Shredded Cheese Cinnamon Rolls <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>Breakfast Bites</b> Meaty Nachos Toppings Shredded Cheese Bread/Butter <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>Apple Breakfast Bites</b> Cheese Breadstick (The Max) Marinara Sauce Carrots <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>
27	28	29	30	31
<b>Donuts</b> Chicken Strips Mashed Potatoes Gravy Bread/Butter <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Scrambled Eggs</b> Hot Dog/Bun Chili Shredded Cheese <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Cinnamon Rolls</b> Breaded Chicken Patty/Bun Broccoli & Cheese Jell-O <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>	<b>Breakfast Bars</b> Hamburger/Bun Baked Beans Pudding <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i> 	<b>Chocolate Chip Muffin</b> Subs Chips Cookie <i>Fruit &amp; Veggie Bar</i>

Friend Public School is an equal opportunity provider

# FEBRUARY Breakfast & Lunch Menu

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
3	4	5	6	7
<b>Breakfast Pizza</b> Chicken Nuggets Mashed Potatoes Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Donuts</b> Walking Taco Shredded Cheese Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Breakfast Bites</b> Mandarin Orange Chicken Rice Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Egg Cheese Omelet</b> BBQ Pork Corn Frosted Cake Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>French Toast</b> Fiestada Spanish Rice Churro Fruit & Veggie Bar
10	11	12	13	14
<b>Pancake Bites</b> Cheese Breadstick (The Max) Marinara Sauce Pudding Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Egg Patty</b> Tomato Soup Grilled Cheese Goldfish Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Cinnamon Rolls</b> Hamburger/Bun Green Beans Chips Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Biscuits &amp; Gravy</b> Spaghetti Breadsticks Shredded Cheese Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Chocolate Chip Muffins</b> Stuffed Crust Pepperoni Pizza Corn Fruit & Veggie Bar
17	18	19	20	21
<b>Pancakes</b> Meaty Nachos Toppings Shredded Cheese Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Breakfast Pizza</b> <b>Bacon, Egg, Cheese</b> Breaded Chicken Patty/Bun Broccoli & Cheese Jell-O Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Scrambled Eggs</b> Hot Dog/Bun Chili Shredded Cheese Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Blueberry Muffin</b> Biscuits & Gravy Tator Tots Juice Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Breakfast Bars</b> Subs Chips Cookie Fruit & Veggie Bar
24	25	26	27	28
<b>Egg Patty</b> Hamburger/Bun Baked Beans Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>Breakfast Pizza</b> Chicken Strips Mashed Potatoes Gravy Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>French Toast</b> Cheese Pizza Cookie Fruit & Veggie Bar	<b>Chocolate Chocolate Chip Muffins</b> Hot Beef Sandwich Mashed Potatoes Bread/Butter Fruit & Veggie Bar 	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
				<b>SUBJECT TO            CHANGE WITHOUT            NOTICE            DUE TO            AVAILABILITY OF            CERTAIN PRODUCTS</b>

# January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
For updated information, please go to <a href="https://friendbulldogs.socs.net/vcalendar/">https://friendbulldogs.socs.net/vcalendar/</a>			<b>NO SCHOOL</b> <i>New Years Day</i>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> GB BB vs. Lourdes (Friend) 4:30/6/7:30 <i>Dance/Cheer Senior Night</i> (3 qtr G JV, 4 qtr B JV) GWR @ Fillmore Central 9:00	EMF FFA Officer Bonding
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> Teacher Cohort Day BOE-Media Center 7:30	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> Teacher Work Day GB BB @ Tri-County 5/6/7:30 (2 qtr G & B JV)		GB BB vs. Southern (Friend) 4:30/6/7:30 (2 qtr G JV, 1 qtr B JV) <i>Pass the Bucket-MAW</i>	<b>2:00 OUT</b> GWR @ Franklin 3:00	GB BB JV EMF Tournament (Friend) 9:00 BWR @ Franklin 10:00
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	GB MUDECAS	BB MUDECAS	EMF FFA State Convention Talent applications due	GB BB MUDECAS BWR @ Yutan  <i>FCA Lunch Meeting</i>	<b>2:00 OUT</b> GB MUDECAS GWR @ Superior 3:00	BB MUDECAS JH BB Quad @ Deshler 10:00 BWR @ Cross County 9:00 Speech @ High Plains (Polk)
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	<i>Martin Luther King Day</i> JH BB vs. SRC (Exeter) 5:00/6:00	GB BB @ Thayer Central 4:30/6/7:30 JH BB vs. Sterling (Exeter) 5:00/6:00		JH BB vs. Sutton (Exeter) 5:00/6:00 EMF FFA Officer Meeting (Exeter) 7:00 GWR @ Thayer Central 3:00	<b>2:00 OUT</b> GB BB vs. Johnson-Brock (Friend) 4:30/6/7:30 <i>GB BB Senior Night</i> <i>Junior Class pie silent auction</i> BWR @ Thayer Central 10:00 EM FCCLA 5th Quarter	JV GB BB vs. Heartland 10:00/11:30  GWR @ Centennial 9:00  Speech @ Thayer Central
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	JV GB BB vs. Fairbury (Friend) 6:00/7:30 Pioneer Conference Instrumental @ HTRS	EMF FFA Chapter Meeting (Exeter) 7:00  <i>Practice ACT-Juniors</i>	EMF FFA State Degree/Proficiency Reviews NHS Parent Meeting 6:30 <i>FCA Lunch Meeting</i>	GB BB vs. Heartland (Friend) 4:30/6/7:30 <i>EMF Boosters Chili Feed</i> JH BB @ Southern (Wymore) 4:30/5:30	<b>2:00 OUT</b> GB BB @ Pawnee City 4/5/6:15/8 BWR @ Freeman 3:00	

## February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
For updated information, please go to <a href="https://friendbulldogs.socs.net/vcalendar/">https://friendbulldogs.socs.net/vcalendar/</a>						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	GB BB Pioneer Conference	GB BB Pioneer Conference		GB BB Pioneer Conference JH BB @ McCool 2:00/3:00 GBWR @ East Butler 2:00	<b>2:00 OUT</b> GB BB Pioneer Conference <b>K-4, 7, 10 Vision &amp; Hearing</b>	GB BB Pioneer Conference <b>JH BB EMF Invite (Friend) A &amp; B Tournament 9:00</b> Speech @ SRC
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	JH BB @ Tri-County 4:30/5:30 <b>JV BB vs. Fillmore Central (Friend) 6:30</b> <b>EMF FFA Officer Meeting (Friend) 7:00</b> <b>BOE-Media Center 7:30</b>	GB BB @ McCool 4/5/6:15/8	Speech Pioneer Conference @ Lewiston  <b>FCA Lunch Meeting</b>		<b>2:00 OUT</b> GB BB @ Diller-Odell (Odell) 4:30/6/7:30 GBWR Districts	<b>JH BB vs. Heartland (Exeter) 10:00/11:00</b> GBWR Districts Speech @ Meridian National FFA Week
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>EMF FFA Pancake Feed (Friend) 10:30-1:00</b>	GB Sub-District JH BB @ Milford 4:30/5:30 National FFA Week	GB Sub-District JH BB @ Seward 4:00/5:00 Girls State Wrestling Omaha National FFA Week	Girls State Wrestling Omaha National FFA Week	GB Sub-District Boys State Wrestling Omaha National FFA Week	<b>2:00 OUT</b> <b>BB vs. Cross County (Friend) 5:30/7:00</b> Boys State Wrestling Omaha State Dance @ GI National FFA Week <b>ACT Now-Juniors</b>	Boys State Wrestling Omaha Speech @ Sutton State Dance @ GI National FFA Week
23	24	25	26	27	28	
	BB Sub-District JH Quiz Bowl @ Thayer Central 4:00	BB Sub-District HS Quiz Bowl @ Seward EMF FFA CDE Districts @ Centennial	<b>12:30 OUT</b> <b>PT Conferences 1-7p</b>	<b>2:00 OUT</b> BB Sub-District  <b>FCA Lunch Meeting</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> GB District Final	



**7-12th Grade Parents:**  
**Please check with your students to see if they need  
more school supplies such as glue sticks and  
pencils/lead in their backpacks.**

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*From The Office*

*Friendly Reminder-Don't forget to empty your voicemail  
so when a school blackboard is activated or your  
child is sick and we are trying to reach you,  
we can leave a message for you to access.*

*Also, if your phone number or email has changed,  
please call the school so we can update your child's  
records.*

**\*\*NOTE: Please use 402-947-2781 when calling the school\*\***

# Kindergarten Gingerbread Houses





# *BULLDOGS OF THE MONTH*



*Staff  
Jay Lawver*



*Female Student  
Avery Tuttle*



*Male Student  
Caleb Black*

Friend Public School  
501 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 67  
Friend, NE 68359  
402.947.2781