



January

2026



From the Desk of Ron Swier:

Jan. 15--- 8th grade career fair in Wagner

Mark your calendars:

Jan. 19th – No School-Martin Luther King Day

Jan. 29th – PTC Conferences, Dismiss at 1:30pm



Corsica-Stickney's readers theater attended the **Region Oral Interpretation** Meet on Monday, November 24th at the First United Methodist Church in Mitchell.

The ensemble titled "Ruffled Feathers" featured Cali, Max, Reed, Wyatt, Jaxson, and Tanner placed 5th.

Although these performers and this piece will not advance to the State Oral Interpretation Meet, we thank our senior participants (Cali, Jaxson, and Tanner) for their years of dedication and leadership to the program.



Reminder you can find a copy of our Title I School wide plan, LEA Plan, Parent/Teacher/School Compact, District Parent Engagement, and School Parent Engagement policies on the school's webpage under the Academics tab or Students tab.

FYI you can see what assessments your student will be taking by checking out the school website Home Page and clicking on South Dakota District Testing Dates 25-26.



Title I Tidbits

Happy
2026!



The **New Year** has us setting goals and thinking about what we will change to improve in the upcoming year. I encourage you to make this year a **year of literacy!** You are your child's **first and most important teacher**. **Give them the gift of a lifetime.....teach them to read!** **Below you will find a checklist of literacy ideas for toddlers and preschoolers.**

Toddlers

- I read with my child every day, even if it is just a few minutes.
- I encourage my child to bring his favorite books to me so that we can read together.
- I point to pictures and name them out loud, and encourage my child to point to pictures while we read.
- I watch to see if my child sometimes makes eye contact with me when I read aloud. That tells me he/she is paying attention to me and the story.
- I talk with my child throughout the day about things we are doing and things that are happening around us.
- I try to be patient when my child wants to read the same book over and over again.
- I encourage my child to "play" with books-pick them up, flip them from front to back, and turn the pages.
- Sometimes I listen when my child "pretends" to read a book-he/she holds the book, goes from page to page, and says words, even though they're not the words on the page.
- I give my child paper and crayons so he/she can scribble, make pictures, and pretend to write

Pre-schoolers

- I help my child hear and say the first sound in words (like "b" in boat).and notice when different words start with the same sound (like "boat" and "book")
- I help my child hear words that rhyme (like moose, goose, and caboose)
- I introduce new words to my child, like "bow" and "stern" which mean the front of a boat and the back of a boat.
- I talk with my child about the letters of the alphabet and notice them in books, like "c" for canoe.
- I point out signs and labels that have letters, like signs and foods in the grocery store.
- I encourage my child to find the joy and fun in reading. Usually, I let my child choose the books we read.
- I let my child pretend to read parts of the book when we read together.
- I talk with my child about stories and make connections to things that happen in our own lives.
- I ask "what," "where," and "how" questions when I read with my child to help him/ her follow along and understand the stories.
- I help my child write notes or make books (like an alphabet book), even if his writing only looks like scribbles or marks.
- I have my child use a scissors and practice cutting on a line and around shapes.

Set aside a time every day to read or have your child read. Unplug, disconnect from technology and get lost inside the covers of a book! Make 2026 a year of Literacy! Happy New Year!

Why Handwriting Matters in the Early Years of Literacy

In a world full of tablets, phones, and computers, it's natural to wonder whether handwriting is still important for young children. The short answer is **yes—handwriting plays a powerful role in how children learn to read, write, and think**, especially during the foundational years of literacy (preschool through early elementary school).

Researchers across education, neuroscience, and child development agree **writing by hand helps build the brain for literacy in ways typing cannot**.

• Handwriting Builds the Brain for Reading

When children write letters by hand, they use many parts of the brain at the same time—movement, vision, memory, and language. Brain imaging studies have shown that **handwriting activates reading areas of the brain more strongly than typing or tracing**.

Researchers at Indiana University found that young children who practiced writing letters by hand showed **stronger letter recognition and better reading readiness** than children who only typed or looked at letters. Writing letters helps children truly “learn” them, not just recognize them on a screen. **When kids write letters, their brains get better at recognizing those letters later when reading**.

• Writing by Hand Strengthens Letter-Sound Connections

Learning to read depends on understanding that letters represent sounds. Handwriting strengthens this connection because children must think about the sound, the letter shape, and how to form it—all at once.

• Handwriting Supports Early Writing Skills

Handwriting helps children develop **fine motor strength and coordination**, which are necessary for writing words and sentences later on. Children who practice handwriting early often find writing less tiring and frustrating as expectations increase in school.

Research from the University of Washington found that children who wrote by hand produced **more ideas, longer sentences, and clearer thinking** than when they typed, even at older ages. **When handwriting becomes easier, children can focus on their ideas instead of struggling to form letters**.

Handwriting Improves Memory and Learning

Multiple studies show that children (and adults) **remember information better when they write by hand** rather than type. Writing slows the brain just enough to help information “stick.”

A large body of research reviewed by psychologists has shown that handwriting supports:

- Better memory
- Stronger understanding
- Increased focus and attention

Kids learn and remember more when they write things themselves.

• Handwriting Builds Confidence and Motivation

Educational research consistently shows that children who feel successful with handwriting are **more confident writers overall**. Confidence matters—children who feel capable are more willing to write, practice, and take risks with reading and spelling.

Title Tidbits....*cont.*

Early handwriting practice is not about perfection. It's about helping children feel proud of what they can do.

- **What Experts Recommend**

Major education and child development organizations agree that handwriting should be taught alongside technology:

- **The American Academy of Pediatrics** encourages hands-on learning experiences in early childhood.
- **The International Literacy Association** supports handwriting instruction as part of early literacy development.
- **Occupational therapists** emphasize handwriting's role in motor development and school readiness.

Technology is a useful tool, but it should **add to—not replace—handwriting in the early years**.

- **How Parents Can Support Handwriting at Home**

Research shows children learn best when handwriting is **meaningful and playful**, not forced. Simple activities make a big difference:

- Writing names, cards, or notes
- Drawing pictures and adding labels
- Making lists together
- Using crayons, chalk, markers, or pencils
- Letting children copy or experiment with letters

Short, positive experiences are far more effective than long practice sessions.

- **A Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy**

Handwriting is not outdated, it is a **brain-building, research-supported foundation for reading and writing success**. When children are given time to write by hand in their early years, they develop stronger literacy skills, better memory, and greater confidence.

In the foundational phase of literacy, handwriting isn't just about letters—it's about helping children become confident learners and communicators.

- **Research Sources (for those who want to learn more)**

- James, K. & Engelhardt, L. (Indiana University): Brain research showing handwriting supports letter recognition
- Berninger, V. (University of Washington): Research on handwriting, spelling, and composition
- International Literacy Association: Position statements on handwriting and literacy
- American Academy of Pediatrics: Guidance on early learning and development

Why Starting Letters at the Top Matters

- **How Top-Down Letter Formation Supports Young Learners**

When children are learning to write, how they form letters is just as important as recognizing them. One small habit—**starting letters at the top and moving downward**—can make a big difference in handwriting, reading, and confidence.

Title Tidbits....cont.

• What Is Top-Down Letter Formation?

Top-down letter formation means children begin most letters at the top and move their pencil down. For example, when writing **b**, children start at the top, pull the line straight down, and then add the curve. This consistent pattern is used for the majority of letters in the alphabet.

• Why Starting at the Top Helps

It Matches How the Brain Learns Letters

Research shows that when children write letters using consistent movements, their brains form stronger connections between how a letter looks, sounds, and feels to write. Starting letters at the top creates a reliable pattern that helps children remember and recognize letters more easily when reading.

It Builds Strong Muscle Memory

Young children rely on muscle memory to write. Studies of early handwriting development show that repeating the same movement pattern helps the hand and brain work together automatically. This makes writing smoother and less tiring over time.

It Supports Clear and Neat Handwriting

Research on handwriting instruction has found that children who are taught correct letter formation early tend to write more legibly. Top-down movements give children better control, helping letters sit on the line, stay the right size, and face the correct direction.

It Reduces Letter Reversals

Letter reversals, such as mixing up **b** and **d**, are common in early writing. Research suggests that consistent starting points help children understand letter direction and orientation, reducing confusion as they learn.

It Makes Writing Easier and More Enjoyable

When writing movements are efficient, children can focus more on their ideas instead of how hard writing feels. Research shows that when handwriting becomes automatic, children have more mental energy for spelling, storytelling, and comprehension.

• How Handwriting Supports Reading

Research consistently shows that handwriting and reading are closely connected. Writing letters by hand activates areas of the brain involved in letter recognition and sound matching. Children who practice correct letter formation often develop stronger early literacy skills than those who only type or trace letters.

• How Families Can Help at Home

Parents play an important role in supporting handwriting development. Simple, playful activities are most effective:

- Encourage children to “start at the top” when writing letters
- Use friendly reminders like “*Start at the top and pull it down*”
- Let children practice forming letters in sand, shaving cream, or with finger tracing
- Model correct letter formation during everyday writing

Keep practices short, positive, and pressure-free.

• A Small Habit with a Big Impact

Starting letters at the top may seem like a small detail, but research shows it supports strong handwriting, reading development, and confidence. By helping children learn efficient letter habits early, we build a solid foundation for literacy success.

Vets for a Night: Supporting Those Who Served

Corsica-Stickney Schools recently hosted “Vets for a Night”, a community fundraiser dedicated to supporting local veterans and their families in Corsica and Stickney. The evening brought together students, staff, veterans, and community members in a meaningful show of gratitude and support. Not only were the veterans recognized, but also their families for all that they do to support their veteran.

This year’s recipient was Verlin Vander Wal of Corsica, with Lyle Bruinsma of Stickney serving as the event Honoree. Both men are proud Vietnam Veterans, and it was an honor to recognize their service and sacrifice.

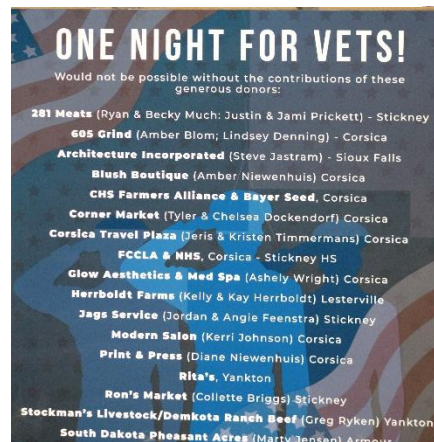
The event featured a raffle, silent auction, and two rounds of Chuck-A-Duck, made possible by the generosity of local businesses, organizations, and individuals who donated items. A special thank-you goes to the Corsica and Stickney American Legion members who volunteered their time to prepare and serve a meal of loaded baked potatoes for a free-will offering.

All funds raised during Vets for a Night will stay local and will be distributed by the American Legion posts in Corsica and Stickney to support veterans and their families as they see fit.

Thank you to all the students, staff, volunteers, and community members who donated items, helped serve, organized activities, and gave their time and energy to make this event such a huge success. Your continued support shows the strong appreciation our communities have for those who served our country.



Above: Local veterans watch as Corsica and Stickney Legion members (left) joined together to present the colors before the basketball game. Above right is Helen Vander Wal, wife of Verlin, (who is in a nursing home) who was honored along with Lyle Bruinsma (pictured right with his wife Jan).



MS/HS Christmas Concert

Merry Christmas!

December 2nd 2025
Concert Scheduling
6th - 12th
Christmas Concert
Directors: Mrs. Terra Knapp
Mrs. Kay Herboldt



6th - 8th Grade Band

The Angels of Christmas.....Arr. Andrew Balant
Gonna Fly Now.....Arr. Spencer Klavanow/Ransford Pierce
Santa Loves to Cha-Cha.....Ed Huckeby

High School Choir

Here Comes Santa Claus.....Arr. Kirby Shaw
Breath of Heaven.....Amy Grant/Chris Eaton
Amen! Tell It on the Mountain.....Arr. Mary McDonald

6th - 8th Choir

Antiphonal Deck the Hall.....Greg Gilpin
On a Night Long Ago.....Natalie Sleeth
Cold Snap.....Mark Hayes

High School Band

Let the Christmas Season Begin!.....Arr. James Swearingen
Deck the Halls with Old Composers.....Jerry Williams
Christmas Africans.....Larry Neek

Combined Choir

.....Peace, Peace



Elementary Christmas Concert

Corsica-Stickney Elementary

Christmas Concert

December 4, 2025



5th Grade Band:

- 1- Jingle Bells
- 2- Ode to Joy
- 3- Hard Rock Blues

K-5 Musical Selections:

- 1-Come On Ring Those Bells
- 2-Good King Wenceslas (Accompanied by 2nd Grade Bell Band)
- 3-Oye
- 4-Keep Cool (3rd & 4th Grade Recorders)
- 5-I love The Lights
- 6-Swinging With Santa C
- 7-Holly Jolly Christmas
- 8-Do You Hear What I Hear

We Wish You a Merry Christmas



2025 C/S FB Awards:

All Conference:

Waylon Bolle and Max Vanden Hoek
Honorable Mention- Quentin De Vries

Class 9B All State Team:

Waylon Bolle at RB
Quenton De Vries at DL
Honorable Mention-Max Vanden Hoek at DB

2025 C/S VB Awards:

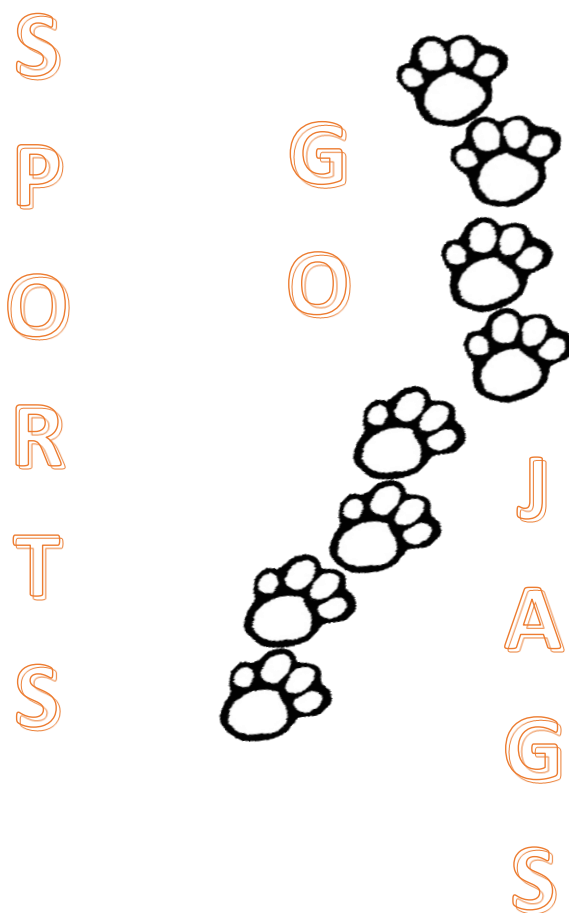
All Conference:

Sophie De Lange, Cali Vanden Hoek
Honorable Mention- Hadynn Johnson

2025 C/S Academic All State Awards:

Seniors that must have a 3.50 grade point average and be a part of program last 3 years:

Waylon Bolle, Jaxson Muck, and Cali Vanden Hoek



Girls BB

Coaches for GBB are: Kyle Wiczorek, Rocky Nelson and Mackenzie Denning.

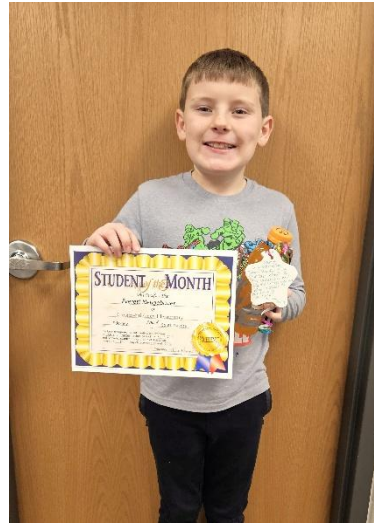
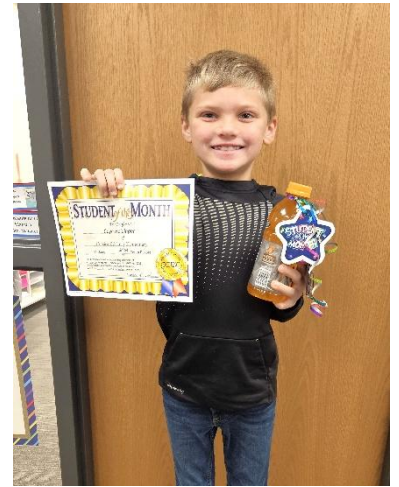


Boys BB

Coaches for BBB are: Luke Bamberg, Wade Gall, Micheal Plooster and Gavin Zomer



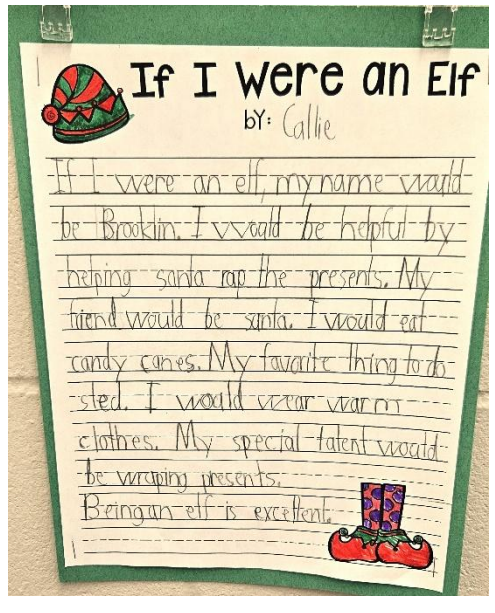
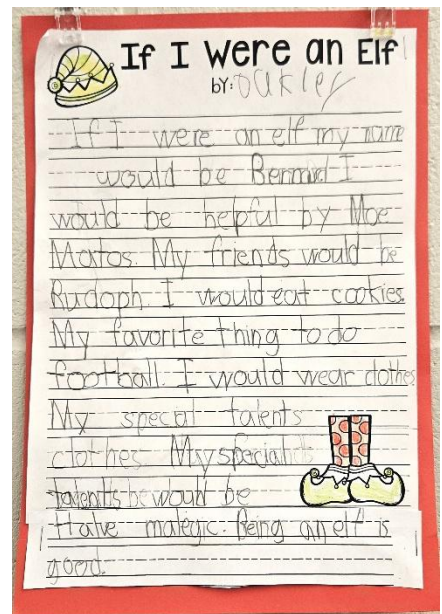
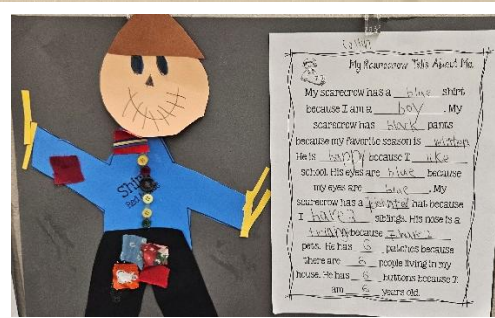
Student of the Month



Left: This year's
NHS group



Right: This year's
FCCLA group



MERRY CHRISTMAS



If I Were an Elf
by: Kali

If I were an elf, my name would be Louie. I would be helpful by giving favors. My friends would be Kelly. I would eat cookies. My favorite thing to do is taking care of friends. I would wear a red and purple sparkling dress. My special talents would be taking care of the animals. Being an elf is fun!



If I Were an Elf
by: Cami

If I were an elf, my name would be Elfy. I would be helpful by help santa put the present in the sleigh. My friends would be Rudolph. I would eat chocolate and caramels. My favorite thing to do is have snowball fights. Santa said. My special talents would be make present. Being an elf is cool!