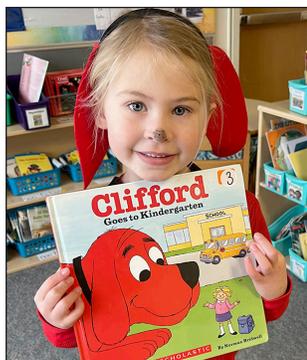


Tiger Cub News

Delano Elementary School Newsletter



March 2022



One highlight of I Love to Read Month was Book Character Day. See photos on Page 8.

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Book Character Day

Dates to remember

March

13....Daylight Saving Time starts

16.....Two-hour late start

25.....End of Quarter 3

28-31....Spring break, no school

April

1.....Spring break, no school

11.....Kindergarten Roundup
(families with last name A-K)

12.....Kindergarten Roundup
(families with last name L-Z)

15.....Good Friday, no school



Young Olympians

Students braved strong winds and cold weather to hold their Winter Olympics on Feb. 11. Activities included hockey, torch races and variations on bobsledding and curling activities. See more photos on Page 3.

Strengthening our practices

By Rachel Schultz
Principal

"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives."

- Robert John Meehan

Over the last few months the elementary school has capitalized on a couple of professional development opportunities to support students and staff: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), and MnMulti-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS).



Rachel Schultz

Both of these opportunities are coming from the Minnesota Department of Education

without cost to the district. We will begin the learning this year and implement strategies as we go over the course of the next few years.

Through collaboration in our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), we will begin to see which strategies offer the greatest impact as we go forward.

LETRS

LETRS® is comprehensive professional learning designed to provide educators with deep

See Schultz
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Johnson named Teacher of the Year

ELL instructor works with students across the district

By Paul Downer
Communications Coordinator

Nothing is more foundational to learning than the ability to communicate, so it is fitting that English Language Learner instructor Ashley Johnson has been named Teacher of the Year for Delano Public Schools.

Johnson serves roughly 40 students from kindergarten through high school, spending time at all three schools on a regular basis. Her students come from a variety of backgrounds and speak Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Spanish, Hmong, French and Thai.

“Ashley continually looks for ways to support her students,” said a nomination submitted by DHS language arts teacher Rachel Holmes. “She works to provide her students with skills that will help them beyond the school walls. She manages a variety of skill levels and accommodates to the ever-changing schedule of adding new students. She is such a valuable asset to our district and our students.”

Each year a handful of teachers are nominated, and the entire district teaching staff votes on a winner. Johnson said the recognition was such a surprise that she felt it must have been a mistake when she learned she had been nomi-



Ashley Johnson works with about 40 students in all three schools. Their native languages include Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Spanish, Hmong, French and Thai.

nated, and her selection as the finalist was even more surreal.

“I feel very humbled, but also undeserving because of everyone else who should be getting it,” she said. “With how difficult things have been in the last three years, this feels like a reward that every teacher deserves. I’m the lucky one. I feel so lucky to work with a staff that is so dedicated to their profession and to my students and my program. I just want them to know how grateful and

thankful I am, because they’re part of why I love my job.”

Foundation

The seeds of Johnson’s career were planted during her high school years in Buffalo when she volunteered to tutor a student from Africa. She enjoyed the process so much that she began mentoring in the English Language Learner (ELL) program as a senior.

“I became very close with some of the students. Some were new to country, some had been in the program for three or four years and had acquired more English skills. I just really loved it,” said Johnson. “I felt I had a passion for that. I’ve always loved languages. I took French all through high school and took Spanish and just loved learning about new cultures and people and where they were from.”

After high school Johnson attended St. Cloud State University, intending to pursue a career as a French teacher.

“I didn’t realize at the time that you could become an ELL teacher – that there was an

actual license for that specifically,” said Johnson.

When she found out, however, she did not hesitate to shift majors. The pathway involved obtaining a degree in English with a concentration in linguistics and a minor in second language acquisition.

So great was the need for English language services that Johnson actually returned to Buffalo before her graduation to work part-time while finishing up her degree. After she graduated, Delano was her first opportunity for full-time employment.

“EL programs look a lot different depending on where you are,” Johnson said. “I knew I liked being in a community and school that was big enough to allow opportunities for my students, to provide what was necessary to be successful with my program, but was also small enough where you feel like you’re part of a family. Because I have a smaller population of students I am incredibly close with them. The relationship I’m



Johnson enjoys building relationships with students over their years in the ELL program.

**See Johnson
Page XX**



Winter Olympics

It was a wild and windy Winter Olympics at DES on Feb. 11, as students braved cold temperatures and powerful winds to enjoy torch races, hockey games, bobsled runs and curling tosses. Here is a look at some of the action from the events.



Kindergarten Roundup

Dates set for April 11 and 12 for next fall

Delano Elementary School invites you to attend Kindergarten Roundup on Monday, April 11, or Tuesday, April 12, for children entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2022.

Families with last names beginning with A through K should come on Monday, April 11, and families with last names beginning with L through Z should come on Tuesday, April 12.

If you have a conflict on your assigned evening, please come on the alternate evening.

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. At 6 p.m. children will remain in the Kindergarten classrooms, and parents/



guardians will move to the cafeteria for an informational session with the principal and dean of students. This session will conclude at about 6:45 p.m.

In order to make this a special evening for you and your child, please make child-

care arrangements for other siblings.

If you have not received a kindergarten registration packet, or if you are new to the area, contact Delano Elementary School at 763-972-6200.

Every Meal provides assistance with food

Delano Public Schools is fortunate to partner with Every Meal to offer a free weekly food program to all students.

Every Meal is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to fight child hunger through community and school partnerships. Every Meal strives to make a difference in children's lives by focusing on food gaps like weekends, school breaks and summer, when students can't receive food in school.

Details

- Free for all families.
- No enrollment qualifications.
- Students enrolled in the program will receive a bag of nutritious, nonperishable food each week.
- Every Meal does not collect information from families; privacy is protected.
- Families may enroll in the program anytime throughout the school year.
- Families may choose from a variety of different weekend meal bag options.

More info

For more information, or to sign up, contact your school social worker or counselor.

DES

Lisa Armstrong
Email: lisa.armstrong@delanoschools.org
763-972-6200

DIS

Nicole Gohman
Email: nicole.gohman@delanoschools.org
763-972-7602

DHS

Elise Boleman & Jodie Fredrickson
Email: elise.boleman@delanoschools.org, or
jodie.fredrickson@delanoschools.org
763-972-7601

DES Family Reading Night

Tuesday, March 8th
Open House Format, 5:00pm-6:30pm

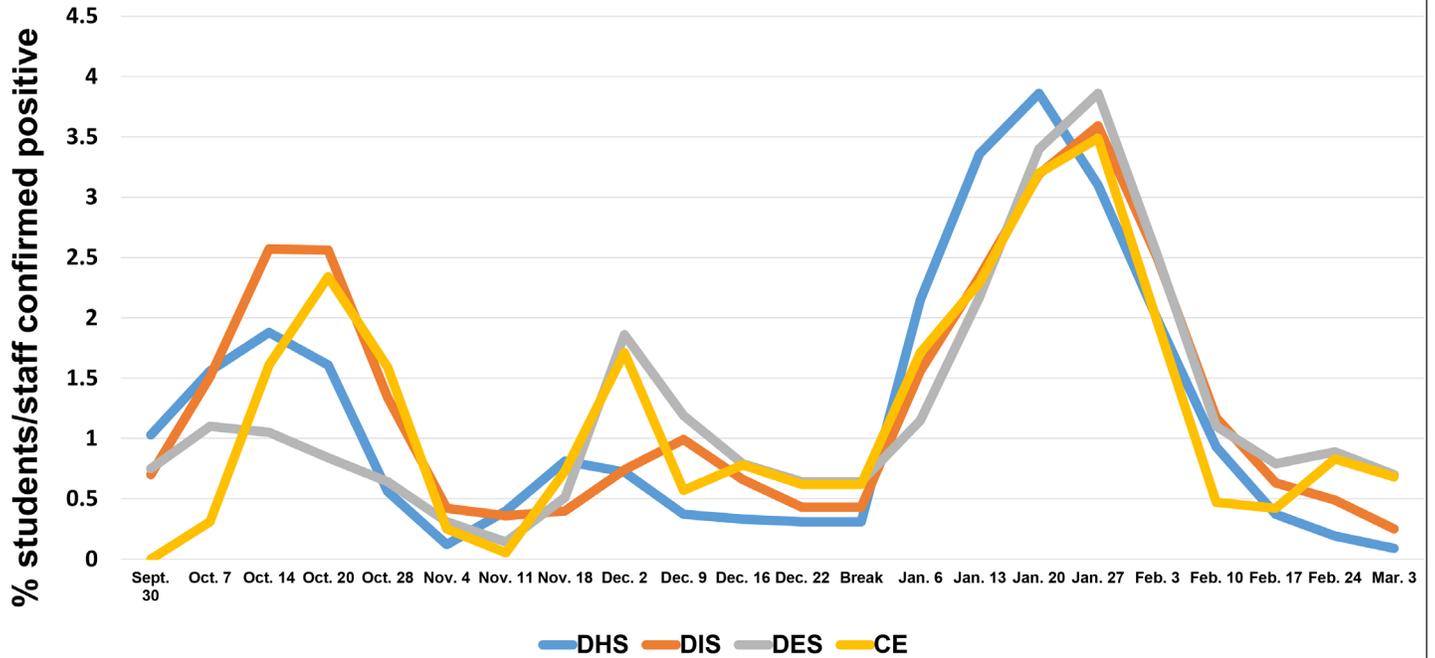
Bring the family and read together!

- Come anytime between 5:00-6:30, as it works for your family
- Books will be set out for you to enjoy, or you can bring your own
- Cozy up with your family upstairs or downstairs around our Media Center
- Blankets and stuffed animals are welcome
- We will announce Mystery Readers throughout the evening
- Stop by the Delano Public Library table to see what they have going on
- Parents are welcome to attend the PIE meeting at 6:00 while children have story time in the Media Center
- Call the elementary office if questions: 763-972-6200



We hope to see you there!

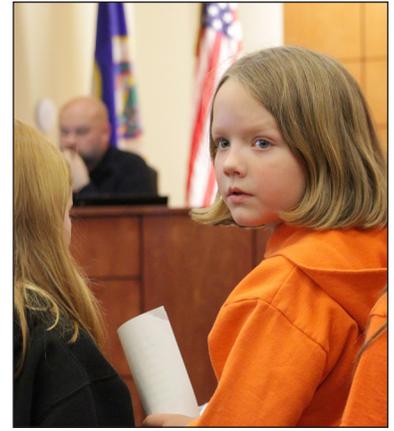
COVID cases 2021-22 (14-day case rate)



LUNCH					MARCH 2022 Delano Elementary School				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Chicken Gravy A)Polish Sausage Mashed Potatoes Peas / Roll Lettuce Salad Orange Wedges	Italian Dunkers Marinara Sauce Corn Lettuce Salad Fresh Fruit	Pizza Green Beans Lettuce Salad Pears	Grilled Cheese Sandwich Tomato Soup Cheddar Goldfish Crackers Veggies Applesauce					
Chicken Tenders Mashed Potatoes / Co Gravy Broccoli / Roll Lettuce Salad Pineapple / Mandarin Oranges	Corn Dog Potato Smiles Baked Beans Veggies Rosy Applesauce	Chicken Nuggets Hashbrown Green Beans Veggies Roll Fruit Cocktail	Chicken Patty – Bun A)PBJ Sandwich Chicken Noodle Soup/Crackers Lettuce Salad Veggies Peaches	Cheesy Breadsticks Marinara Sauce Corn Lettuce Salad Fresh Fruit Cookie	7	8	9	10	11
Nachos – Beef / Cheese Lettuce / Onions / Salsa Refried Beans OJ Cup Fresh Fruit	Cinnamon Roll Cheese Omelet Steamed Broccoli Hashbrown Baked Apple Slices	Spaghetti – Meat Sauce Green Beans Lettuce Salad Garlic Bread Pears	Chicken Nuggets Hashbrown Corn Veggies Roll Fruit Cocktail	Hamburger A)Egg Salad Sandwich Sun Chips Lettuce / Tomatoes Pickles / Onions Orange Wedges	14	15	16	17	18
Domino's Pizza Green Beans Lettuce Salad Pears	Macaroni and Cheese Peas Lettuce Salad Roll Orange Wedges	Tacos Lettuce / Cheese / Salsa Refried Beans OJ Cup Fresh Fruit	Teriyaki Chicken Brown Rice Stir Fry Vegetables Lettuce Salad Pineapple	Quesadilla Corn Salsa Lettuce Salad Fresh Fruit	21	22	23	24	25
No School Spring Break	No School Spring Break	No School Spring Break	No School Spring Break		28	29	30	31	



This Institution is an equal opportunity provider
Menu subject to change based on product availability



Board presentation

As part of 'I Love to Read Month,' first-graders under the direction of DES Principal Rachel Schultz and first-grade teacher Nicole Jensen gave a spirited reading of a story during the school board meeting on Monday, Feb. 28. 'This is always our favorite meeting of the year,' said Vice Chair Amy Johnson.



Schultz

from Page 1

knowledge to be literacy and language experts.

Developed by Dr. Louisa Moats and leaders in the field of literacy, LETRS® teaches the skills needed to master the foundation and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction — phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language.

We currently have over 20 teachers who have voluntarily signed up to take the LETRS® learning courses. What is unique about this professional development is that it spans over a year and a half. It also incorporates job-embedded professional learning to practice the strategies with

students throughout the year.

Educators will have opportunities to collaborate with others within the district that have signed up, but will complete the courses on their own time (over 150 hours!) to deepen their knowledge of literacy. We are excited for this opportunity and to learn more about teaching reading.

MTSS

The other professional development opportunity is guiding us in re-establishing our support for students both academically and behaviorally through the MnMTSS framework.

The last two years of various learning models, as a result of pandemic learning and teaching, have had huge impacts on students and staff. We are learning ways to systematically support staff and students'

needs across the district through this professional development.

Delano is part of a cohort with surrounding schools that meets monthly to discuss ways through MnMTSS to support learning gaps that all schools are experiencing. These trainings are facilitated by experts in this field to give us direction and coaching moving forward.

Our first task within our team is to determine what supports we already have in place that are successful and what crucial parts need to be established or refined.

Bringing teacher leaders across the district together in both of these professional development opportunities will be valuable, challenging, and necessary to bridge the learning gap among students while supporting staff in implementation.

Diaper drive

The Delano Elementary Kindergarten classes held a diaper drive in February to provide supplies to Love Inc. The drive netted a total of 1,774 diapers, 41 pull-ups and 1,740 wipes. Thank you, DES families, for your generosity in this endeavor!



Johnson

from Page 2

able to have with each one is truly unique and individual because of how much time I can spend with them, and how they stay with me as they move through our buildings.”

Forging connections

Although one might not think of Delano as an international destination, it has become home to many nationalities.

“There is a wide variety,” said Johnson. “That’s something that continues to surprise me since we’re a small town, but their families come from all over.”

How does she go about connecting with students who speak languages she doesn’t know?

“We use Google translate if we need to, but I try my hardest to learn something in their language to make that connection with them, because it makes a huge difference,” Johnson said. “I think that builds rapport.”

Non-verbal communication is also key to establishing a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

“You have to make it fun for them, because they might be in a position where they understand 10-15% of what I’m saying, but if I use different body language and facial expressions to make things understood, it really helps,” said Johnson. “I have a ton of fun with my newcomers. Those are some of my most challenging days, but also some of the most rewarding.”

Good relationships are essential to enabling progress when students find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings.

“A lot of students come from situations where classrooms were not white walls

with posters. It was different, or maybe they didn’t go to school, or school was outside,” said Johnson. “In order to learn language you need to be able to take risks, and to take risks you need to be comfortable. I’ve had students who are very anxious and don’t feel comfortable doing that right away, and that makes it very difficult to learn English. I just make sure my classroom is a very welcoming and open space, and a space where they can take language risks and start the language acquisition process to be proficient in English.”

From the point when those initial connections are made, English instruction commences with the basics of the alphabet, letter sounds, vocabulary and conversational English. Although there are a many variables in how quickly a student progresses, a typical timeline for new students to fully acquire English proficiency is five to seven years.

“You start with some of those things that almost seem like kindergarten basics and go from there,” said Johnson. “At the end of the day I just want to make sure I fulfill all the needs of my students. Whether that’s academic, linguistic, social-emotional or any other need they may have, I just want to make sure that I am there for them.”

Broader learning

English language learners spend more or less time with Johnson depending on their needs, but they also participate in many other classes with accommodations that Johnson establishes with their regular education teachers. When she is not directly engaged with students herself, she is often providing support to other teachers who have English language learners in their classroom.

“A lot of my students come to Delano

and they’re smart. In their native language they do well in school, so it’s just the language that needs to be modified,” said Johnson. “So it’s important to re-frame our thinking to say that EL is enrichment, not intervention. Modifying for language takes time and can be difficult, but when we focus on that we can really see them do well and succeed.”

World traveler

When she isn’t in the classroom, Johnson’s affinity for unfamiliar cultures naturally leads to a lot of travel.

“If I could spend every weekend on an airplane to somewhere new and uncomfortable for me, pushing myself, that would be my dream,” she said with a laugh.

Some of her favorite trips have been to South Africa, Croatia and Egypt. In addition to travel on her personal time, Johnson has led spring break trips for Delano students to Washington, D.C., and New York. She also organizes international ventures to China or, later this year, Costa Rica.

“Every time I take a trip I learn something new about the world and I can bring it back to my students,” she said. “I’m not saying I can put myself in their shoes because I absolutely cannot. But it changes my perspective of this small town. The people out there in the world – even if you can’t speak the same language – you can still have meaningful interactions.”

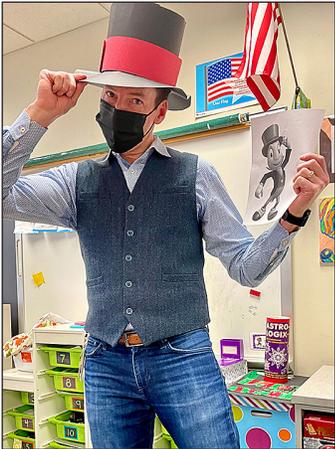
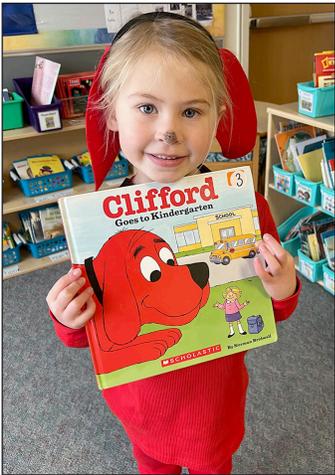
And when she’s not traveling herself, Johnson said that engaging with her students and their varied backgrounds is her favorite aspect of the job.

“I’m continually learning from my kids because of the experiences they bring into my classroom, and the perspective that they give,” she said. “It has made me a better teacher, and a better person.”



Book characters visit DES

A highlight of February's 'I Love to Read Month' was Book Character Day on Feb. 9. Many literary favorites showed up for the festivities, including Harry Potter, Clifford, princesses from various fairy tales, and more.



Time is right to become a substitute teacher

Have you ever thought about serving as a substitute teacher? Delano Public Schools is seeking substitutes to help cover gaps in staffing.

- Substitute teachers can:
- Choose their own schedule.
 - Choose to work close to home or experience many different schools and districts.
 - Find jobs through easy online job scheduling.

Delano Public Schools is seeking substitutes to help cover gaps in staffing.

- Work short- or long-term positions.
- Explore a variety of classroom settings, from primary to secondary levels.

Teachers on Call is the agency that provides substitute teachers in Delano. You can apply with Teachers on Call by visiting www.teachersoncall.com, or calling 952-346-1656. Free training is provided to new substitutes.



Tiger Cub News is published by Delano Elementary School. Editor, Paul Downer, District Office, 763.972.3365, ext. 1911, paul.downer@delanoschools.org



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