

# The Scratching Post

February 2024

## Junior High Basketball Recap By Brentsen McGowan

Junior High basketball just finished another season, and they showed a lot of progress this year. Junior High girls' basketball is for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders, while the boys' are for only 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. With more depth on the bench this year for both teams, the students were able to grow and show their competition what they were made of.

Coach Avila had nine girls on his team this year. 8<sup>th</sup> graders Riley Allen, Makynna Boettcher, Karyle Dittbenner, and Kyrie Roldan are returning for their last junior high season. They are joined by 7<sup>th</sup> graders Kassie Loutzenhiser and Maddie May, along with newcomers Kambrie Loutzenhiser and Callie Woodral from 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The girls were determined to go undefeated this season and win the MAC conference tournament. Well, they accomplished both of these goals. The girls had an undefeated season, with 10-0 as their record. The team says their main highlight of the season was the Garden County game because they overcame the adversity of being up at half-time and continuing to play their game. Coach Avila summarized the girls' improvements: playing better as a team, improving their ball handling immensely, and having a better ability to run the floor, as well as their attitudes towards the game. Avila still thinks, "We have yet to play our best game, but when we do, watch out!" This leads to high hopes for the coming seasons and seeing the girls continue to improve, especially with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders moving up to high school basketball next year.



The Junior High Boys are back this season under the guidance of a new coach, Ray Lemoine. Lemoine was most excited about seeing what the boys were capable of. His highlight from the season was the Scottsbluff game when the team was working together on offense and defense. Even though the boys didn't have a winning record, they still showed much improvement this season. The boys came together to work as a team, which is a foundation for a stronger team for the coming year.

As the season came to an end, Coach Avila and Coach Lemoine were proud of the massive amounts of improvement from their teams. As the eighth graders move on to high school basketball next year, we will welcome the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to the teams.



**BANNER COUNTY SCHOOL**

**PREPARING THE STUDENTS OF TODAY FOR THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!**

## New Year - New FFA Competitions by Adam Knaub

There have been two FFA district competitions since the start of the new year. These two competitions have been very good for the FFA Chapter, with teams taking home top spots at these events. This year's teams have done the best they have ever done at these competitions compared to the last couple of years. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, there was the District CDE at Scottsbluff, which included Welding, Livestock Management, and Ag Sales. The second one in January was on the 31<sup>st</sup>, including Ag Mechanics, Food Science, Vet Science, and Farm and Ranch Management.

The Welding team included Nathan Clement, Adam Knaub, Wyatt Reichenberg, and Blake Ysac. This team did very well. Blake placed 2nd in the Gas Metal Arc Welding sector, Wyatt placed 2nd in the Shielded Metal Arc Welding sector, Nathan placed 2nd in the Oxy Acetylene Welding sector, and Adam placed 5th in the Gas Tungsten Arc Welding sector with the team as a whole placing 1<sup>st</sup>. The welding event involved a hands-on welding test and a written exam. The welding portion required contestants to weld metal according to the build plan they were given, and then they were judged on the finished product. The written exam counts for fewer points but is also important because it assesses their welding knowledge. Each section can have its own winner depending on how well the contestant performs and their test results.

The Livestock Management team placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Dairy and Swine divisions. This team of five included Micah Dittbenner, Kambree Hottell, Logan Mason, Isaac Olsen, and Andie West. There were six categories of exams: beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, and horses. Each portion assessed a different aspect of the designated animal, such as quality assurance, breed identification, associated diseases, and anatomy. The beef portion included a feed ration balance test, while the dairy included reading milk receipts and identifying different kinds of cheeses. As for the poultry, tests included identifying various parts of the egg and the chicken. Additionally, each team member took two tests about poultry and agriculture. The Ag Sales team, comprised of Ti Gaash, Nate McGowan, Brendyn Onstott, and Jacob Parsons, was also a part of this competition. This was a learning opportunity for the team as they didn't have prior experience with this event. Although they didn't place, they performed well.

In the second competition of the year, the Ag Mechanics team placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. This team included Nathan, Adam, Brentsen McGowan, and Wyatt. In this event, the contestants have specific areas that they specialize in for the competition, which include hydraulics, small engines, electrical systems, and machinery. The competition consists of a hands-on task in which the individuals work on an assignment they are given by the judges, like wiring up an outlet, timing a small engine, finding specific parts on a piece of machinery, or taking a hydraulic cylinder out and finding the area of the cylinder. Once they have completed the task, they switch to an identification exam where they must identify symbols or different parts of the system. This team qualified for the State Competition based on their hard work on this exam. **Continued on page 3.**



Continued from page 2.

Unfortunately, not all FFA members who attended qualified during this competition. However, the students still came away with the knowledge gained from this opportunity. These students were a part of the Food Science, Vet Science, and Farm and Ranch Management teams. Some of these teams, such as the Food Science and Farm and Ranch Management teams, were missing the required number of team members to qualify for state. However, these were still learning opportunities for the individuals participating in each event. As for the Vet Science team, Kambree walked away with a ribbon for her test portion.

According to Mr. Gifford, "I see a lot more willingness to step up and take a leadership role in the chapter and the school. The members have done a good job expanding their experiences by trying new competitions and getting others to do so as well." The FFA chapter has one more district competition in Kimball before state. The FFA members have done a great job this year by competing at a high level and trying new things and different competitions!



Banner County FFA is hosting a silent auction on March 1, 2024 at 5:30. Come enjoy a meal and games while bidding on silent auction items along with a few live auction items. Questions- contact a local FFA member or Mr. Gifford

### Senior Spotlight — Nathan Clement

This month's senior spotlight features Nathan Clement. Nathan is described as hard-working, reliable, and flexible. We asked Nathan about his high school years and what his plans are for after graduation.

**Q: What extracurricular activities have you participated in?**

A: FFA, Quiz Bowl, Speech, Football, Basketball, and Trapshooting.

**Q: What are your goals for this year?**

A: I wish to perform my best in my activities and get 1% better each day.

**Q: What are your plans for after high school?**

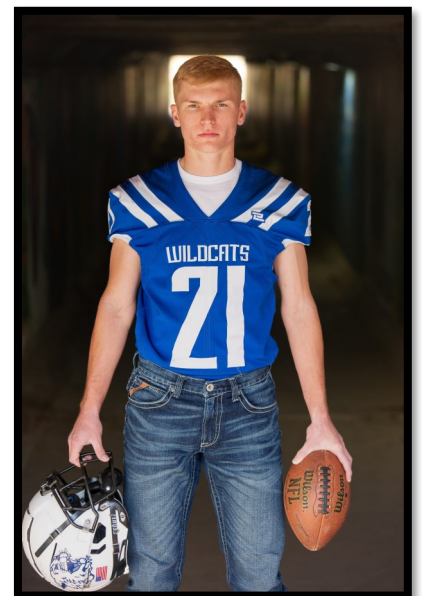
A: I will be going to Milford to become a certified Ford technician.

**Q: What is one of your favorite classes and why?**

A: Ag class because I get to do things that I am unable to do at home. Along with honing my abilities for FFA.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to younger students?**

A: Don't go along with the crowd especially if they are heading for a cliff.



## Class Results

|     | 1st Place            | 2nd Place        | 3rd Place         |
|-----|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| K   | Breklyn Cross        | Raelyn Peterson  | Corielle Martinez |
| 1st | Amiah Cooper         | Izaveaha Chairez | Willow Turner     |
| 2nd | Jaxson Loutzenhiser  | Colbie Knaub     | Emberly Valverde  |
| 3rd | Bexlie Groves        | Dalton Gilbert   | Rebecca Jones     |
| 4th | Gabe Olsen           | Trenton Knaub    | Aili Cooper       |
| 5th | Rylie Jeffries       | Jaspan Vrbas     | Railin Mesteth    |
| 6th | Kambrie Loutzenhiser | Callie Woodral   | Rory Jeffries     |
| 7th | Luke Olsen           | Tack Cross       | Braedyn Bojorquez |
| 8th | Shawnie Mason        | Colesen Gilbert  | Gabe Collier      |

## Spelling Bee Results

The 2024 Spelling Bee was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:30. We had 77 participants from Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Kari Gifford was the reader and head judge. Sharon Lease was the assistant judge. Kari and Sharon did a super job!

This year's champion was **Tack Cross** in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Due to prior engagements, Tack will not be able to move onto the Regional Competition so our runner-up, Shawnie Mason, will attend the Regional Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup> in Omaha, Nebraska.



| Overall Finals | Student              | Grade Level |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------|
| 8th            | Rylie Jeffries       | 5th         |
| 7th            | Railin Mesteth       | 5th         |
| 6th            | Kambrie Loutzenhiser | 6th         |
| 5th            | Callie Woodral       | 6th         |
| 4th            | Luke Olsen           | 7th         |
| 3rd            | Colesen Gilbert      | 8th         |
| Runner-Up      | Shawnie Mason        | 8th         |
| Champion       | Tack Cross           | 7th         |

## Senior Spotlight – Wyatt Reichenberg

This month's senior spotlight features Wyatt Reichenberg. Wyatt is described as motivated, tough, and steadfast. We asked Wyatt about his high school years and what he plans to do after graduation.

**Q: What extracurricular activities have you participated in?**

**A:** I've participated in Wrestling, FFA, Rodeo, and Football.



**Q: What are your goals for this year?**

**A:** My main goal for the year is to graduate.

**Q: What are your plans for after high school?**

**A:** I want to rodeo while attending college.

**Q: What is one of your favorite classes and why?**

**A:** I like work based learning because I get to go to work and learn new things while on the job.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to younger students?**

**A:** When things get tough, keep going. You don't succeed unless you fail. Failure is the key to success.

**2023-2024**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**BANNER COUNTY SCHOOL**

**Administration**  
Dr. Evelyn Browne, *Superintendent*  
Troy Holmberg, *Principal*  
Kari Gifford, *Activities Director*  
Christopher Cooper, *Guidance*

***"Preparing the students of today for the world of tomorrow!"***

Dear families and patrons of Banner County School,

It is my pleasure to share this Annual Report and mid-year reflection on our school community! The school year has been busy with a very full roster of activities and sports. Our reading incentive program, AR Road, continues to get students from Kindergarten to High School into books and set personal reading goals. Monthly school-wide assemblies have recognized students nominated for "Student of the Month" and "Shout Outs!" to elementary students caught doing random acts of kindness. The Jobs for American Graduates (JAG) program, first in the Panhandle, aims to develop leadership and job readiness skills among middle and high school students.

We continue to work towards aligning academic programs across grades levels and publishing the curriculum for each subject. Our web-site, which is still undergoing some fine-tuning, will ultimately house the curriculum. My goal is to have all curricula and course information accessible on the web-site by the end of the summer.

Across Nebraska, the importance of Career and Technical Education (CTE) is central to many conversations about school-based opportunities and preparation for life beyond high school. While funding for program components such as materials and supplies is important (BCS received about \$14,000 in CTE funding this year), having talented teachers, industry partners, and flexible scheduling are the keys to giving our students options and opportunities to explore a variety of career paths. We hope to expand the choices for entry level certifications through our partnership with Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) for our students. Two of our programs, FFA and HEC, continue to provide real-world experiences for students. FFA students completed the construction of a greenhouse this year and High Energy Cappuccino has extended their morning coffee service at the walk-up window to Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays.

For the 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row, we have managed to reduce the property tax levy while improving programs and embarking on a major facilities upgrade. Our partnership with AMERESCO takes advantage of 1% financing that will save energy dollars, improve the aesthetic appearance of our classrooms and halls, and keep the snow melt from seeping into classrooms! We look forward to the project's completion by the end of the summer.

This year, we welcomed ten new staff members! While staffing continues to be a challenge across the state and teacher recruitment and retention a topic of many school administrator conversations, we are fully staffed from the principal's office to PK! Learning new roles and responsibilities, developing academic and activity schedules, and supporting each other amidst all of the change are testimony to the dedication of our staff to our students and our school. BCS is a wonderful place to learn, work, and play!

Yours in education,



Evelyn Browne, Ed.D.

**Board of Education**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Dr. Ronald E. Johnson, <i>President</i> | Megan Allen |
| Douglas Olsen, <i>Vice-President</i>    | Laura Baker |
| Jake Knaub, <i>Treasurer</i>            |             |

**Banner County School**

Phone: (308) 436-5262

**PO Box 5, 200 School St.**

Website: [www.bcswildcats.org](http://www.bcswildcats.org)

**Harrisburg, NE 69345**

Fax: (308) 436-5252

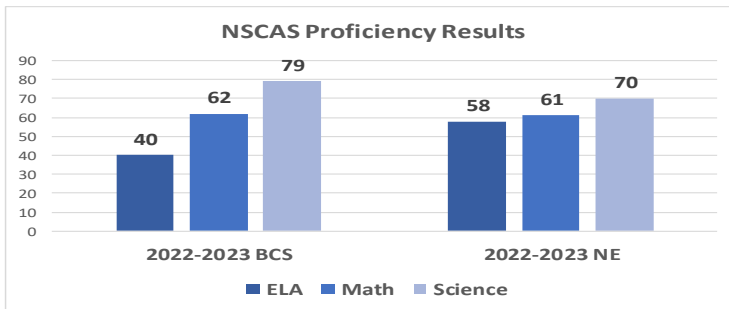
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bannerwildcats/](http://www.facebook.com/bannerwildcats/)

## Student Academic Growth—K-8

Nebraska Dept. of Education uses NSCAS Growth, an adaptive, assessment of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3-8 and Science in grades 5 & 8. NSCAS Growth assesses the progression and growth of students based on the year end standards for their grade level, reported as Developing, On Track, and Advanced.

NSCAS results are reported as averages, which gives us a bird's eye view of student growth, but do not represent the individual student growth achieved in our small classes. When we look at the data, we see students who have met or exceeded expectations, and despite reports of learning loss due to COVID from many parts of the country, most of our students' learning is "On Track."

Assessment data help us support students by making adjustments to instruction, program materials, and allocation of teaching and support staff. Our data indicate BCS students are headed in the right direction—exceeding the State proficiency averages in both Math and Science.



|                               | 23-24         | 22-23         |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| General Fund Budget Authority | \$5,123,894   | \$5,200,882   |
| Property Valuation            | \$330,722,063 | \$309,947,739 |
| Property Tax (GF)             | \$2,614,736   | \$2,657,822   |
| Building Fund Tax             | \$143,182     | \$50,505      |
| Total Tax Levy (per \$100)    | 0.834         | 0.874         |

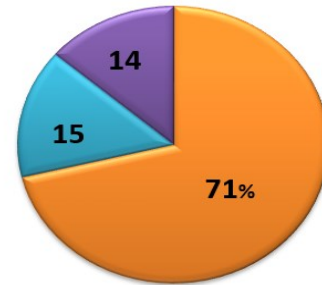
## OUR STUDENTS

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Resident Students       | 101      |
| Option Students         | 43       |
| Total                   | 144      |
| Free & Reduced Lunch    | 62%      |
| Special Education       | 17%      |
| English Learners (ELLs) | 1%       |
| Student Mobility        | 1.9%     |
| Graduation Rate         | 100%     |
| Hispanic/Latino         | 22%      |
| African Am./Am. Indian  | 1%       |
| High Ability Learners   | 16%      |
| Per pupil cost          | \$31,665 |

| Class | Size |
|-------|------|
| PK    | 8    |
| K     | 9    |
| 1     | 13   |
| 2     | 19   |
| 3     | 9    |
| 4     | 8    |
| 5     | 8    |
| 6     | 11   |
| 7     | 9    |
| 8     | 13   |
| 9     | 8    |
| 10    | 9    |
| 11    | 9    |
| 12    | 11   |
| Ave.  | 10   |

## SCHOOL FINANCE

### Distribution of GF Expenditure



Students Administration Facilities

## STAFF

Administrators—2

Teachers—21 Guidance—1

Library Aide—1 Custodial/Maintenance—2

School Nurse—1 Paraprofessionals—5

Kitchen Staff—2 Tech Support—.5

Bus drivers—8 Part time Custodians—2

Teachers with Master's Degrees—10

Teachers with 5+ years' experience—18

Student-Teacher Ratio— 7:1 State Ave—14:1

## TRANSPORTATION

BCS operates 8 bus routes with door-to-school service in the county and stops in Gering and Kimball. The annual pupil transportation budget of \$185,900 supports both route and activity trips for students. At the mid-year point, our drivers have travelled 87,284 miles safely. We have 5 staff members with CDLs, 5 staff members certified to drive a small bus, and 3 substitute bus drivers with CDLs. All staff members who drive small vehicles for activities complete the trainings required in Nebraska. Finding qualified bus drivers, for both regular routes and as substitutes, continues to be a challenge! The district is an approved FMSCA training site and Tod Wenger, our Driver Education instructor, can certify drivers in the ELDT on-site. We will also reimburse all costs associated with obtaining a CDL to potential drivers with signed contracts.



# Board Briefs

February 12, 2024

## Awards and Recognitions

President Johnson commended the following students and staff:

**-Students of the Month:** Judd Stauffer - PK, Judah Garrett - 2, Andie West - 12, Adam Knaub - 12

## -FFA Teams going to State:

**Welding Team** - 1st at Districts (Scottsbluff) - Blake Ysac, Wyatt Reichenberg, Adam Knaub, & Nathan Clement

**Livestock Management Team** - 3rd at Districts (Scottsbluff) - Kambree Hottell, Andie West, Isaac Olsen, Logan Mason, & Micah Dittbenner

**Ag Mechanics Team** - 3<sup>rd</sup> at Districts (Gordon) - Adam Knaub, Wyatt Reichenberg, Jacob Parsons, and Nathan Clement

**-Spelling Bee Winners:** Congratulations to all the students who participated in the Annual Spelling Bee on February 1st. Winners: 1<sup>st</sup> place: Tack Cross (7th grade), 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Shawnie Mason (8<sup>th</sup> grade), and 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Colesen Gilbert (8<sup>th</sup> grade).

-JH Girls Basketball won the MAC Championship in Bridgeport on Saturday, February 10th.

-Wyatt Reichenberg was the district Champion Wrestler at Bayard on Saturday and will go on to the State Wrestling Championship on Feb 15th. [Wyatt placed 2nd at State Wrestling!]

-Congratulations to Sandy Wounded Arrow whose article on the Buffalo Soldier Bands was published in the Nebraska History Magazine.

## Approve 2024 District/Board and Superintendent Goals

Adopt the Banner County School District Board and Superintendent Goals for calendar year 2024 as presented.

## Approve 2024-2025 School Calendar

Adopt the 2024-2025 school calendar as presented.

## Accept Certified Staff Resignation

Regretfully accept the resignation of Kari Gifford effective the end of the 2023-2024 contract year due to retirement, with appreciation for her many contributions to the students and school for 30 years.

**The complete February 12, 2024 minutes can be found at [www.bcswildcats.org](http://www.bcswildcats.org).**

## First Semester Honor Roll

### A Honor Roll

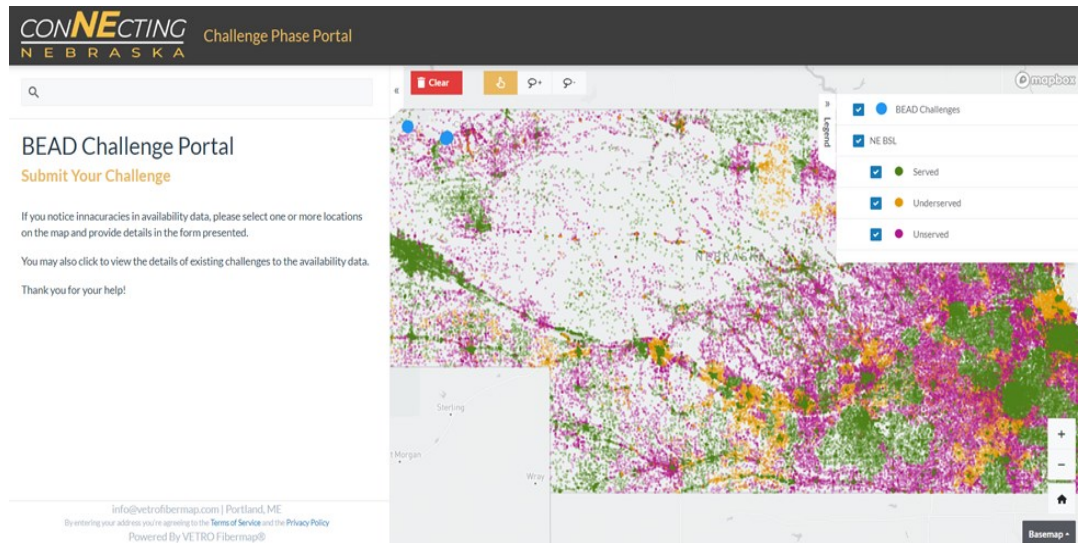
Nathan Clement  
Hugo Rodriguez Escalera  
Kambrie Loutzenhiser  
Shawnie Mason  
Isaac Olsen  
Luke Olsen

### A/B Honor Roll

Makynna Boettcher  
Micah Dittbenner  
Makayla Enriquez  
Adam Knaub  
Kassie Loutzenhiser  
Logan Mason  
Leeigh McGowan  
Brendyn Onstott  
Jackson Onstott  
Sam Onstott  
Jacob Parsons  
George Teeple

## Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

Do you have access to high-speed internet? The purpose of the BEAD challenge process is to ensure the accuracy of the Nebraska Broadband Availability Map. Everyone in Nebraska is encouraged to verify the service they receive at their home and/or business is accurately reflected on the map. If not, a challenge should be filed to correct it. The challenge process is expected to begin March 1st. **Banner County School will serve as an advocate for BEAD challenges.** Check out the Nebraska Broadband Availability Map: <https://broadband.nebraska.gov/broadbandavailabilitymap/> Call Dr. Browne for more information at 436-5262.





HARRISBURG, NE 69345  
 CURRENT RESIDENT or PO BOX

Banner County School  
 P.O. Box 5  
 Harrisburg, NE 69345



# MARCH 2024

| Sunday  | Monday                                 | Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday   |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Banner County School  |  |  |        |   | 1<br>• OEF/ Teacher Work Day<br>• 5:30pm FFA Silent Auction  | 2<br>• Speech @ Mitchell   |
| 3   | 4<br>• Read Across America Hat Day     | 5<br>• Read Across America Many Colors                               | 6<br>• 9:00am FFA District CDE Contest @ Kimball<br>• Read Across America Wacky Wednesday | 7<br>• Read Across America Pajama day                   | 8<br>• No School   | 9  |
| 10  | 11<br>• 9:00am Speech Districts @ WNCC | 12   | 13<br>• JH Quiz Bowl @ Kimball  | 14<br>• K-2 AR Party                                    | 15<br>• No School/ Teacher Work Day  | 16   |
| 17<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.<br> | 18<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C. | 19<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.<br>• Quiz Bowl @ Creek Valley | 20<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.<br>• 8:00am WNCC Rep Juniors/Seniors               | 21<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.                  | 22<br>• No School/ Teacher Work Day<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.<br>• Speech State @ Kearney<br>• 1:00pm JH Quiz Bowl | 23<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.<br>• TBD HS Track @ Morrill |
| 24<br>• Close-Up Trip to D.C. & N.Y.C.  | 25                                     | 26<br>• MAC Music Contest @ Garden County                            | 27<br>• Geography Bee   | 28<br>• TBD HS Track @ Bayard<br>• 5:00pm NHS Induction | 29<br>• No School  | 30   |
| 31  |  |  |   |   |  |  |