



MUSTANG MONTHLY™

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Empowering every student to create their future.

DCG Community,

There's a new sense of energy as the calendar turns to March! More sun, more green grass and no more snow days (sorry, I just jinxed it). Here are a few updates from DCG CSD!

All seven of our buildings have completed their 2025-26 safety trainings. It's important for you, our community, to know how invested our team is when it comes to student safety. Deputy Alan Loutzenhiser and Deputy Ben Spracklin led our team through several safety scenarios, pushing our knowledge in our emergency response protocol.

89% of DCG staff members say the 2025-26 safety training exercises were a beneficial learning experience. 90% of DCG staff members say they would like these trainings to continue on a yearly basis. Staff feedback will continue to guide our work in this area.

I also wanted to provide a few quick hitters for our community.

- Adam Tjeerdsma has been hired as the new principal at Heritage Elementary. Tjeerdsma has served DCG for 16 years and is currently an associate principal at Perry Elementary School. He will work closely with Diann Williamson as she prepares for retirement after an incredible career in public education.

- The 2026 ISASP testing period at Dallas Center-Grimes will be March 30 - April 24. Look for information to come out in building newsletters.

- Spring Break at DCG is set for March 16-20. I'll spend it rooting for the Iowa State Cyclones on their way to the Final Four.

- The final day of school for students (as of 2/25) remains Monday, June 1.

Thanks for making DCG a great place to live and work!

- **Superintendent Blum**



CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE

March 4, 11, 25 - Early Dismissal

March 9, 11, 12 - PK/8 Parent Teacher Conferences

March 16-20 - Spring Break



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Home of the Mustangs



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DALLAS CENTER-GRIMES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OFFICES

Elementary Offices

Patty Morris, Principal/South Prairie Elem.
E-mail: patty.morris@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 986-4057
Fax Number: (515) 986-4532
500 SW James Street, Grimes, Iowa 50111
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

April Heitland, Principal/North Ridge Elem.
E-mail: april.heitland@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: 515-986-5674
Fax Number: 515-986-5376
400 N.W. 27th Street, Grimes, Iowa 50111
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Diann Williamson, Principal/Heritage Elem.
E-mail: diann.williamson@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 300-9627
Fax Number: (515) 300-9627
500 NE Beaverbrook Blvd., Grimes, IA 50111
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Deb Cale, Principal/Dallas Center Elem.
E-mail: debra.cale@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 992-3838
Fax Number: (515) 992-3467
1205 13th Street, P.O. Box 400, Dallas Center, Iowa 50063
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Jason Snow, Principal/ DCG Middle School
E-mail: jason.snow@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 992-4343
Fax Number: (515) 992-4076
1400 Vine Street, P.O. Box 608, Dallas Center, Iowa 50063
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Oak View/Joan Cundiff, Principal
E-mail: joan.cundiff@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 986-0105
Fax Number: (515) 986-3155
1300 SW County Line Road, Grimes, Iowa 50111
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

High School Office/Matthew Blackmore, Principal
E-mail: matthew.blackmore@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 986-9747
Fax Number: (515) 986-9734
2555 W. 1st Street, Grimes, Iowa 50111
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Transportation Office/Jeff Wolfe, Transportation Director
Email: jeff.wolfe@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: 515-986-5173
255 SW Jazzwood Dr.
Grimes, IA 50111
Office Hours: 7:00 am - 4:00 p.m.

Central Office/Business Office
Dr. Scott Blum, Superintendent
E-mail: scott.blum@dcschools.com
Telephone Number: (515) 992-3866
Fax Number: (515) 992-3079
2405 W. 1st Street, P.O. Box 680
Grimes, Iowa 50111

DISTRICT UPDATES

National School Counseling Week - DCG CSD celebrated our incredible team of school counselors February 2-6. DCG Counselors are trusted mentors who help our students navigate through their education journey. We are thankful for their dedication and drive every single day!

DCG School Counselors

DCG High School - Danielle Clancy, Lisa Rinehart, Nathan Gross | *Oak View* - Emily Waugh, Sarah Rose | *DCG Middle School* - Emma Olejniczak, Megann Roff | *Elementary* - Courtney Anderson, Mallory DeLacy, Brandon Fitch, Adam Jones, Logan Wilson, Jordan Paup. Thank you counselors!!



DCG Creators - Help us celebrate another incredible group of DCG Creators! We are grateful for all of the ways they are making an impact at DCG! Our recipients were honored for living out DCG's Core Values. Mony Petersen – Dallas Center Elementary, Bekah Frisk – Dallas Center Elementary, Sabrina Morua – DCG Middle School, Cejae Eastman – DCG Middle School, Harley Vestal – DCG Middle School, Megann Roff – DCG Middle School, Sarah Rose – Oak View, Emily Waugh – Oak View, Dani Christensen – Oak View, Julie Rumans – South Prairie Elementary, Jenny Rants – South Prairie Elementary, Julie Parnau – South Prairie Elementary, Kristina Miller – South Prairie Elementary, Camily Deitrick – South Prairie Elementary, Abie Chavez – South Prairie Elementary Sarah Schock – South Prairie Elementary, Hannah Klatt – Heritage Elementary, Erin Bryant – North Ridge Elementary, Lisa Battistone – DCG High School, Anne Frett – DCG High School Kathy Fistler – DCG High School, Pam Short – DCG High School, Matthew Pasma – Chartwells, Paige Elsbernd – DCG Business Office, Jana Arment – DCG Transportation

National School Resource Officer Day - We celebrated Deputy Alan Loutzenhiser and Deputy Ben Spracklin on February 15. DCG's SROs are making a meaningful impact on our district every single day! From day to day interactions, to leading our safety trainings, we are grateful for their dedication and commitment!

DISTRICT UPDATES



Chili Cook-Off with Chartwells - We've been living in chili weather lately! But luckily Chartwells has been finding a way to warm up in the lunchroom with a chili cook-off featuring Team DCG. We held a competition at Oak View featuring Team Joan Cundiff against Team Sarah Rose (Champion). At DCG Middle School, it was Team Snow taking on Team Grull. Team Grull took home the "w" and Principal Snow received a pie to the face from his own daughter! Thanks to Chartwells for providing these moments!



Court In Session - Library students at DCG Middle School debated on several topics related to academic integrity. Each scenario featured two lawyers and a judge, who ultimately decided whether the situation demonstrated academic honesty or a rules violation. This learning experience allowed our students to showcase their understanding of building expectations and apply it to their work in library!



Education Foundation Update - Dallas Center-Grimes Education Foundation Scholarships are now open!

We offer scholarships for students pursuing any post-secondary educational path: trades, community colleges, and universities.

Important Dates:

March 1 - Applications Open

March 31 - Applications Close at 11:59pm

Get started on your application early so you have time to perfect it.

For more information, including FAQs and the application links, please visit dcgeducationfoundation.org

Non-Discrimination Statement - It is the policy of the Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. In addition, the Dallas Center-Grimes Community School District is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations not to discriminate on the basis of sex and this requirement extends to admission and employment. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy contact Dr. Greg Carena, Associate Superintendent of School Improvement, 2405 W. 1st Street, Grimes, IA 50111, Telephone: (515) 992-3866, Email: greg.carena@dcschools.com Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Denver Office, U.S. Department of Education, Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building, 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80204-3582. Telephone: (303) 844-5695, Facsimile: (303) 844-4303, TDD:(800) 877- 8339. Email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov

From Chartwells - Discovery Kitchen: Smart Snacking, featuring our Spicy Lime Homemade Tortilla Chips. This month's lesson focuses on helping students make smarter snack choices that fuel their bodies and support their learning. Discovery Kitchen continues to expand students' taste buds and introduce them to new, exciting culinary experiences.

Oak View Honors - Congratulations to Oak View students, Gracyn Auten, Kyrie Peterson, and Tenley Peterson, for being nominated and selected for the Blank Scholars Institute, an intensive one-week residential summer program for Iowa's most talented 7th- and 8th-grade students. These students were selected from many outstanding nominations. Gracyn and Tenley are 7th-grade students at Oak View, and Kyrie is an 8th-grade student at Oak View!

School Board Update - The DCG School Board will meet on Monday, March 30. The agenda will be posted at DCGschoools.com along with a link to watch the meeting live.

Seal of Biliteracy - The Seal of Biliteracy is an award recognizing students who attain proficiency in two or more languages, one of which is English, by high school graduation.

The Seal of Biliteracy:

- Values language as an asset
- Recognizes the value of language diversity and cultural identity
- Prepares students with 21st century skills that will benefit them in our global society, especially during college and job searches
- Provides recognition and evidence for students' proficiency in two or more languages

To be eligible for the Iowa Seal of Biliteracy, each student must demonstrate proficiency in English and a world language through various assessments. Students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy will be recognized during the graduation ceremony, and the seal will be shown on their diploma and official transcript.

Dallas Center-Grimes Testing Information:

The school district will cover the cost for administering the initial test, but the students will be responsible for the fees associated with retakes.

Dates: April 13, 14 and 15, 2026

Times: April 13 & 14 3:15 p.m. and April 15 at 1:00 p.m.

Room: Mrs. Hawks Room #628
Please contact Mrs. Hawks by April 4 if you would like to sign up to participate in the upcoming testing session: laree.hawks@dcgschools.com

HIGH SCHOOL

NHS Donation Drive - The Dallas Center-Grimes High School National Honor Society wrapped up their second annual donation drive for the Central Iowa Homeless Shelter and Service. All seven DCG buildings participated in the drive and our students collected hundreds of donations that will make an impact in our community! A special shout out to the NHS Service Committee for leading the way! Your dedication to make a difference is inspiring!



Academy Awards - The 32nd Annual Academy Awards will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Dallas Center-Grimes High School Auditorium. This special evening provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate students in grades 9–12 for the many talents, strengths, and contributions they bring to our school community. If your high school student has been nominated, please be on the lookout after Spring Break for a nomination invitation, which will be sent by mail. We invite you to join us for this exciting and meaningful event as we honor the outstanding accomplishments and bright futures of our Dallas Center-Grimes High School students. We look forward to celebrating together!

BIG NEWS FOR DCG DECA

DCG DECA Wins Big

State Champs - 4

Top Seven Finishes - 15

DCG DECA had an incredible performance at the 2026 state competition!

A special shout out to Raquel Gao (Restaurant & Food Service Management), Ethan Mc-

Connell (Sports & Entertainment Marketing), Nessibeli Savet (Principles of Business Management & Administration) and Drew Every (Personal Financial Literacy) for claiming a state championship!

Also finishing in the top seven: Ryan Carstensen, Cael Ramsey, Bronwyn Squires, Claire Schnoebelen, Caelyn Short, Roxanne Gao, Jaxon Quinlivan, Jacob Carstensen, Rory Kading, Ryan Weydert, Zach Lane. Great job DCG DECA!



ELEMENTARY



Art Month Celebration - Youth Art Month celebrates student artwork from across the state of Iowa. Each year, hundreds of pieces of art are submitted in hopes of being accepted to the Youth Art Month Show in Des Moines. Less than half of artworks are typically accepted. This year, South Prairie had two pieces accepted. In addition, one of the pieces took the award for 3rd place of all elementary art submitted! The third place winner will receive a \$50 gift certificate for art supplies. We are so excited to celebrate the creative success of these students! Congratulations to Mia Boyd (top right) and Hayden Bell (top left) on your accomplishment! Hayden's drawing received 3rd place honors in the elementary division!

Special Learning Experience at Heritage

Members of the Meskwaki Nation performed a traditional dance ceremony, showcasing their culture to our students! From the rich history to the colorful clothing, Heritage students had an incredible look at the history of cultures around us. Leaders of Meskwaki Nation performed several traditional dances, highlighted common words in their language and answered questions from our students. This was an incredible way to connect our students with cultures living around us.



Preschool Travel - DCG Preschool students are traveling all over the world this month! The transportation unit included a pretend plane ride, including personalized boarding passes. Once aboard the airplane, the student pilot and student air traffic controller took over! What a fun way to learn about travel!



Oak View Students Honored

- We are so proud to celebrate Nicholas Jordan, who earned a Silver Key for his novel excerpt, and Abigail Ramsay, who received Honorable Mention for her poem in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards!

Founded over 100 years ago, the Scholastic Awards recognize outstanding creative work by teens across the country. Submissions are reviewed anonymously by accomplished artists and writers, with jurors focusing on originality, craftsmanship, and the development of a strong personal voice or vision.

Nick and Abby's recognition is a true testament to their talent, creativity, and courage in sharing their work. Well done—we can't wait to see where your writing takes you next!



ACTIVITIES



DCG Gives Back - Several members of the DCG Basketball program participated in the Grimes Hunger Fight event in February. They worked together to package meals for people experiencing food insecurity. Thanks for supporting our community!

Booster Club Update - The DCG Booster Club is seeking volunteers for the 2026–2027 school year. As a volunteer-led organization, we're only as strong as the people who step up, and now is the perfect time to get involved and be trained for next year.

Open roles include Concessions Purchasing (seasonal roles), Merchandise Coordinator, and Sponsorship Coordinator. Interested? Contact Robin at vp@dcgboosterclub.com to learn more!



All-State Speech - A new record! Twelve groups from DCG Large Group Speech were nominated for all-state, and five of them are performing! This is an incredible achievement that showcases the talent and dedication of our entire speech program! In all, 57 students earned all-state recognition in 2026!

Performing: Group Mime - Childhood Chapters: Grace Crow, Cael Ramsey, Taylor Gray,

Emily Kleckner, Hunter Quandt, Gabi Vandenberg

Group Mime - Board to Death: Lily Briggeman, Joella Duncan, Blaire Ehlert, Elana Hamp, Roxy Monner, Mya Southwick

Group Mime - Down the Rabbit Hole: Lily Crow, Nathan Fitch, Bella Gray, Becca Mathesius, Peyton Olson, Sam Shephard

Solo Mime - Knock Knock, Who's There: Roxy Monner

Ensemble Acting - Almost, Maine: Mady Brown, Lars Dodd, Gavin Eickelberg, Daphne Swayne, Brynn Weydert

Non Performing: Improv - Sophie Hrubetz, Will Kestel, Nora Spooner, Gabi Vandenberg

Musical Theater - Mummy Boy: Lily Briggeman, Gavin Eickelberg, Evan Friesen, Will Kestel, Hunter Quandt, Andrew Ver Ploeg, Brynn Weydert

Musical Theater - The Last Five Years: Campbell Bowen, Mady Brown, Nathan Fitch, Taylor Gray, Emily Kleckner, Addison Ramirez, Leo Rzewnicki, Owen Weiler

Musical Theater - Legally Blonde: Kayla Atanga, Macey Clark, Greer Kleis, Megan Peterson, Izzy Powell, Madi Uhl, Elle Wedeking, Brynn Weydert

Readers Theater - How to Survive Being in a Shakespeare Play: Emilie Bryant, Karin Danickova, Paige Harden, Max Johansen, Greer Kleis, Rebecca Mathesius, Evelyn McFarland, Silas Miller, Chris Montoya, Peyton Olson, Andrew O'Neil, Oliver Rouse, Cameron Smith

9th Readers Theater - The Steadfast Tin Soldier: Rhys Phillips, Avishi Rastogi, Hannah Cook, Amelia Dahm, Michelle Williams, Addie Farrell, Maddie Holcomb

Ensemble Acting - Five Women Wearing the Same Dress: Grace Crow, Nora Spooner, Madi Uhl, Elle Wedeking, Zofi Woollums



Winter Guard Performance - The Marching Mustangs Winter Guard performed "Applause" at a home game on Feb. 10. This group has been rehearsing since early December and is made up of students with all levels of color guard experience. They also performed at Oak View in February!

ACTIVITIES



Girls State Wrestling Recap - DCG ended their season strongly by sending four of their girls to the Iowa High School State Wrestling Tournament at Xstream Arena in Coralville. DCG's 2026 state qualifiers were Nia Kiley, Jenah Gray, Ashtyn Jahangir, and Aubrey Borcharding. Their season this year included many team wins and DCG is very proud of how hard all of these wrestling girls have worked!

Boys State Wrestling Recap - The DCG Boys Wrestling qualifying for state duals for the 5th time in school history and the first since 2010. To qualify for state duals, DCG took down Ankeny 44-21 in a regional dual. The Mustangs finished in 6th place at Dual Team State Wrestling. DCG also sent eight wrestlers to the Iowa High School State Wrestling Tournament! 106 – Quinn Harris, 120 – Noah Kerndt, 132 – Avery Van Zelderren 157 – Cole Hemmingsen, 175 – Tyde Nelsen, 190 – Kellen Wegner, 215 – Connor Stolpe, 285 – Lucas Scholl. Van Zelderren and Hemmingsen both placed 6th in their weight class while Wegner and Nelsen placed 7th. A special shout out to Cory Stratton and the entire coaching staff for earning IWCOA Coach of the Year honors in Class 3A. It was a great winter on the mats!

Six Straight to State - The DCG Girls Basketball team is heading back to the Class 4A State Tournament! The Mustangs knocked off Pella 60-28 in a regional final on Tuesday, February 24. This will be DCG's sixth consecutive trip to the Iowa High School Girls State Basketball Tournament! DCG opened state tournament play on Tuesday, March 3 with a quarterfinal game against Waverly-Shell Rock!



Boys Basketball Advances in Playoffs - The DCG Boys Basketball team opened their postseason journey on Monday, February 23 with a 91-48 victory over Ottumwa. The win was highlighted by a special moment in the fourth quarter when Namish Khatri connected on his first ever field goal! Namish is a foreign exchange student from Pakistan and said "it was the greatest night of my life" after the game. Head to DCG-schools.com for more with Namish. The Mustangs second round game was February 27 against Johnston.

Note from the Editor - The March 2026 Mustang Monthly was sent to print on Wednesday, February 25. We will provide updated information about sporting events in the April issue.

DallasCenter-GrimesCommunitySchool
2405 West. 1st St.
P.O. Box 680
Grimes, IA 50111

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5th Grade Comic Portraits - Artists explored the visual language of comics to create expressive self-portraits inspired by graphic illustration styles. Students studied elements such as bold outlines, exaggeration, color, and visual storytelling, then applied these techniques to design portraits that reflect their personalities. Each piece highlights how artists can use stylization and creative choices to communicate individuality.

6th Grade Agamographs - Students created agamographs that reveal two images when viewed from different angles, combining art with problem-solving and planning. Students reflected on their personal strengths and selected a word that represents a quality they value in themselves. Through careful design, folding, and craftsmanship, they learned how artists can use visual techniques and composition to express identity and meaning.

6th Grade Ceramic Mug Project - Our students have been hard at work designing and building their own ceramic mugs. Each piece is uniquely customized to express personal interests and creativity. As they glaze and finish their work, students are excitedly preparing for our upcoming hot chocolate celebrations, where they'll get to test their handmade creations!

