

February 2026 Elementary Principal School Board Report

January was a very productive and eventful month at Dundy County Stratton Elementary. We began the new semester with a teacher Inservice on January 5, and students returned to school on January 6, energized and ready to learn.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Benkelman Lions Club for providing vision and hearing screenings for all students K–12 on January 19. We appreciate their continued support of our students. Mr. Frank Merklin serves as the president of the Benkelman Lions Club, and we are grateful for his leadership and community involvement.

January 21 was a particularly busy and exciting day. Our 5th and 6th grade students attended the Healthy Habits program in Culbertson, while our Elementary Quiz Bowl team competed at the Southwest Quiz Bowl Meet and earned an outstanding 2nd place finish. Quiz Bowl team members include Josey Haskell, John Ladenburger, Mason Mathews, Zoey Jesch, Ollie Mears, Claire Schack, Aubree Freed, and Hadley Forch. Alternates included Kazlyn Kier, John Baldeh, Brooks Mandl, and Jeffery Lytle. Congratulations to all students involved on a job well done.

On January 22 and 23, Mrs. Gritzuk attended the Courage to Risk Conference for Special Education. Our school bus CB communication system was also updated by Prairie State Communication and is working very well, improving safety and communication for our transportation team.

Professional development continued on January 27 when Mrs. Shaylee Davis attended the Science of Reading Seminar at the ESU. On January 28, we hosted our annual 5th–8th Grade Scripps Spelling Bee. This year's champion was Emily Trysdale, with Zoey Jesch earning 2nd place. Emily will represent Dundy County Stratton at the State Spelling Bee in Omaha this March. Congratulations to both students.

Mrs. Krug launched our Book Blast program with a Zoom session for teachers. This exciting program ensures every student receives a book and includes engaging activities such as completing a treasure map. The program is ongoing at the time of this report.

Ms. Fahrenholtz and Mrs. Marshall attended Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) training, which aligns with Nebraska's state reading initiative. We also completed our required fire drill to ensure continued preparedness and safety.

On January 29, we celebrated our 100th day of school, followed by a fun Kindergarten celebration on January 30, when students dressed as centenarians to mark the occasion.

As we move into February, our students remain actively involved in club sports such as wrestling, basketball, and volleyball, Lego Club, as well as Girl Scouts, all our sharing our facilities after school hours. We also completed Winter MAPS testing and saw strong results across grade levels. Hats off to our teachers, staff, and students for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. Dundy County Stratton Elementary truly is a great place to be.

Sincerely,
Kristian K. Freeland
DCS Elementary Principal