



Northstar Calendar

December

- 10 8th grade - Guthrie Field Trip
- 11 7th and 8th grade Choir Concert, 6:30pm
- 12 Polar Party 2:51-4:15pm
- 15 7th and 8th grade Orchestra Concert,
7:00pm at North High
- 18 7th and 8th grade Band Concert, 6:30pm
- 24 - 31 - No School

January

- 1-2 No School
- 6 PTSA Meeting, 6:30pm, Northstar Commons
- 15 6th grade Band Concert, 6:30pm
- 16 Ski Trip @ Christie Mountain 2:30-10:00pm
- 19 - No School
- 20 - Start of Q3 athletics
- 22 - End of Quarter 2
- 22 - 6th grade Choir Concert, 6:30pm
- 22 - 6th grade Orchestra Concert,
7:00pm at North High
- 23-26 - No School

[2025-26
School Year
Calendar](#)

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

[STUDENT SERVICES](#)

[FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK](#)

[ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

[VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[POLAR HIGHLIGHTS](#)

[IMPORTANT LINKS](#)

Find us on 

Lus Hmoob

Yog tias koj xav tau tsab ntawv no txhais
hu rau Annie Moua, Northstar Hmong
Educational Assistant, tus xov tooj yog
715-852-6577.

En Espanol

Si necesita ayuda para leer esta
información, por favor contacte a Irene
Salazar, profesora de español de
Northstar a isalazar@ecasd.us o llame a
715-852-4943.

Student Services



**Updates
from
Student
Services !**

Contact Information

Ms. Amanda Kikilas
Financial Secretary/Registrar
715-852-5103
akikilas1@ecasd.us

Ms. Lisa Sproul
School Counselor (Last Names K-Z)
715-852-5118
lsproul@ecasd.us



Ms. Jenni Berg
School Counselor (Last Names A-J)
715-852-5119
jberg@ecasd.us

Ms. Kassie Dunbar
School Social Worker
715-852-5114
kdunbar1@ecasd.us

Ms. Katarina House
School Psychologist
715-852-5165
khous1@ecasd.us

Registration for 2025-26

Course registration for the 2026-26 school year will take place throughout the month of January 2026. More details coming soon!

6th Grade Meet & Greet Conferences

As mentioned in the last newsletter, individual meet and greet conferences are now taking place with all 6th grade students. The focus of the conferences is based on the Wisconsin School Counseling Standards, which include the following topics: Academics, Personal/Social, and Career Development. Students will also have an opportunity to ask questions, as well as learn about resources and activities available at Northstar.

From the Principal's Desk

Dear Polar Families,

Recently, the ECASD provided opportunities to learn and discuss an important change regarding how student learning will be assessed and reported at our school and in our district. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, the ECASD will transition to Standards-Based Grading (SBG). This approach helps focus on what students know and can do in relation to clearly defined learning standards, and moves our reporting practices away from averaging points across assignments and generating a single letter grade. Our goal as educators is to continue to develop and create strategies and systems that provide accurate, meaningful feedback that supports growth and helps every student find success. While this is a considerable change in practice at the middle and high school levels, district education partners within the Chippewa Valley have made this shift without a need to go back to a traditional letter grade format (Chippewa Falls, Altoona, Mondovi, and others). While there is much to learn between now and next fall, our motivated and dedicated educators both at Northstar and across the District are ready and excited for this change.

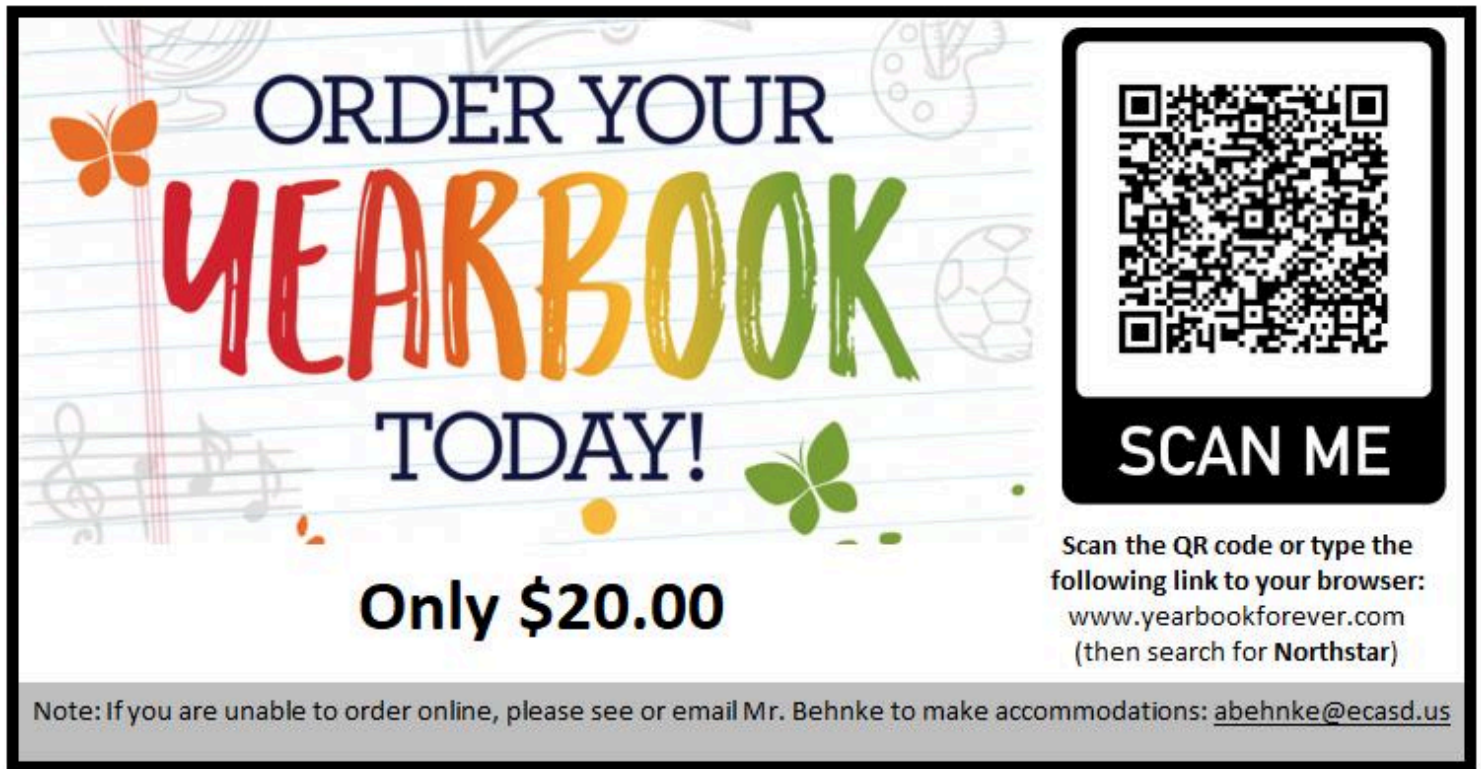
With SBG, report cards will show progress toward specific standards instead of a single overall grade at the middle school level. While this may create some learning opportunities around how reporting of learning will look in the future, this also means families will receive more clear information about strengths and areas for improvement within each class a student takes. This also means there is separate reporting on the quality learning habits we want to see in students as they move through their middle school experience (aka profile of a graduate). Separating behaviors from skill will also help create a more accurate representation of learning and performance. Students will continue to have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning during a unit of study, and teachers will provide feedback that guides next steps. Rather than chasing points to get a grade, we are chasing learning. While subtle, we believe that this system (and change in thinking) creates a more equitable and consistent way to communicate learning and ensures that grades reflect academic achievement more clearly than ever before.

For more details, join us for any of our district wide upcoming information sessions. Thank you for partnering with us to make learning the focus of grading!

Finally, I want to extend a heartfelt Season's Greeting to you all. I hope the end to 2025 is filled with excitement, peace, and joy.

Adam Keeton
Principal

Announcements



ORDER YOUR
YEARBOOK
TODAY!

Only \$20.00

SCAN ME

Scan the QR code or type the following link to your browser:
www.yearbookforever.com
(then search for Northstar)

Note: If you are unable to order online, please see or email Mr. Behnke to make accommodations: abehnke@ecasd.us

ECASD Emergency School Closure Family Communication



There is a familiar chill in the air which leads us to think about colder weather and the inclement weather that may come with it. Here is the [Eau Claire Area School District Emergency School Closure Family Communication](#) for the 2025-2026 school year.

Please look for announcements about emergency school closings in several ways through Skyward and ParentSquare messages, on the ECASD website, on the ECASD Facebook feed, and through local media outlets.

Don't hesitate to call your school office if you have questions.

Announcements

Civics Bee

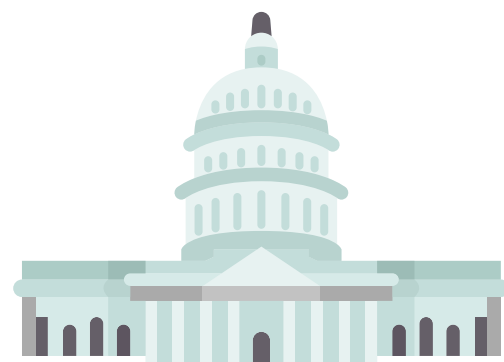
We are excited to announce a unique opportunity for our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students: the National Civics Bee®.

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to host this first-of-its-kind civics competition that encourages young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. Participating students will flex their civics knowledge for a chance to win recognition and cash prizes. Finalists will even be invited to Washington, D.C. to compete in the National Civics Bee® national championship in Fall 2026.

Students enter by writing a four-paragraph essay where they identify a community problem, propose a solution, find support for their idea, and connect it to Founding Principles and Civic Virtues. Our Social Studies teachers will be handing out information flyers and the official 2025-2026 Essay Application Guide to all students. The deadline to submit the essay is February 3, 2026.

Online Application / Sign Up Now: [Wisconsin National Civics Bee® - Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce](#)

Please reach out to Ms. Witkus-James at hwitkusjames1@ecasd.us if you would like more information.



Announcements

Student Council

Our next **Polar Party** will be held after school on December 12th from 2:51-4:15pm. Tickets will be \$2 and be available at all three lunches the week of the party. We are planning to donate a portion of the proceeds to our Northstar food pantry, the Kitchen Cupboard.

Upcoming Spirit Days!

December 12 - Hoodie Day

January 9 - Lounge Wear/PJ Day



PTSA Dairy Queen Fundraisers

On the first Tuesday of each month through May 2026, stop by the Pinehurst Dairy Queen between 4:00-9:00pm and Northstar PTSA will receive 10% of the proceeds! PTSA helps fund activities like Northstar field trips, mini grants, and much more! Thank you for your support!



Upcoming Fundraiser Nights

Tuesday, December 2

Tuesday, January 6

Attendance Policy at MS/HS Athletic Events



A quick reminder about the attendance policy for middle school students at high school and middle school athletic events: In order for a middle school student to attend an athletic event, they must have a parent or guardian in attendance at the event with them. Thank you in advance!

Announcements



ROYAL
CREDIT
UNION

MIDDLE SCHOOL

COMING UP...

RCU at Northstar is getting in the holiday spirit! This December, we'll have a fun holiday-themed activity with a money twist. Stop by the teller stand outside of the cafeteria to join in — it's the perfect way to celebrate, learn, and maybe even earn a prize!

HOURS:

RCU at Northstar is open every Friday, before school, just outside the cafeteria. Stop by the RCU teller stand to make a deposit of at least \$0.50 to earn a prize!

Royal Credit Union at Northstar!



4 SMART TIPS FOR A STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays are fun—but they can also get expensive and a little tricky. Here are four ways to stay on top of your spending and avoid scams this season:

1. 🎯 **Set a Budget**
 - Think ahead and decide how much you want to spend.
 - Include gifts, travel, food, and decorations.
 - Keep track so you don't go overboard.
2. 👁️ **Keep an Eye on Your Spending**
 - Give yourself a limit for each person on your gift list.
 - Use a budgeting app or a simple spreadsheet.
 - Save your receipts and adjust if needed.
3. 🛒 **Shop Smart**
 - Compare prices before buying.
 - Look for deals, coupons, and sales.
 - Homemade gifts or gift swaps can be awesome and affordable.
4. 🚫 **Watch Out for Scams**
 - Only shop on secure websites (look for the lock symbol 🔒 and "https").
 - Don't click on sketchy ads or links

If your student would like to sign up for our program, follow this link to open an account www.rcu.org/schoolaccounts. We welcome your questions about Royal Credit Union and how you can get your student started saving at school.

*Happy
Holidays*

Please contact Rachel Orlovsky at rachel.orlovsky@rcu.org with any questions.



Announcements

Community Events & Resources

- Please visit this [link](#) for a list of upcoming and ongoing events and resources available in our community.

[Eau Claire Food and Resource Pantries](#)

[Despensas de Alimentos y Recursos de Eau Claire](#)

[ECASD Community Events/Resource Flyers](#)

Free Dental Program

Northlakes Community Clinic is excited to offer a school-based preventative dental program to all children enrolled in your school! A Registered Dental Hygienist will come on-site to provide dental services at NO COST, meaning families will never receive a bill for services. This program is designed to complement your child's regular dental care and can be used alongside services provided by your family dentist. If your family does not have a regular dentist, Northlakes would be happy to assist you in finding one. To sign up, pick up a permission form from Northstar's front office, or sign up online here – sealasmile.wisconsin.gov/Consent/Home/About

Holiday Resource List

Looking for assistance with shopping, gifts, or clothing this holiday season? Check out the list [here](#) from Eau Claire County Human Services for local resources.



Announcements



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE GREATER CHIPPEWA VALLEY



human-i-t



YOU COULD QUALIFY FOR A FREE LAPTOP

WHAT: THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE GREATER CHIPPEWA VALLEY- LEE & MARY MARKQUART CENTER HAS PARTNERED WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT, THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, AND HUMAN IT TO BRING FORWARD A NEW PROGRAM TO ASSIST IN CONNECTING LOW INCOME AND UNDER CONNECTED FAMILIES WITH REFURBISHED LAPTOPS TO BRIDGE THE GAP FOR TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY AND ACCESS IN JACKSON COUNTY, DUNN COUNTY, AND EAU CLAIRE COUNTY.

WHO: QUALIFICATION FOR A LAPTOP IS INCOME DRIVEN AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE TABLE TO THE RIGHT.

HOW: IF YOU MEET THE REQUIREMENT PLEASE SCAN THE INCLUDED QR CODE AND FILL OUT ALL THE QUESTIONS. ONCE A LAPTOP IS AVAILABLE YOU WILL BE EMAILED BY THE CLOSEST BOYS & GIRL CLUBS OF THE GREATER CHIPPEWA VALLEY TO SCHEDULE A TIME FOR PICK UP.

WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF YOU: THERE WILL BE TWO SUVERYS; ONE AT 3 MONTHS VIA EMAIL, AND ONE AT 6 MONTHS VIA PHONE CALL.

Household/ Family Size	200%
1	30,120.00
2	40,880.00
3	51,640.00
4	62,400.00
5	73,160.00
6	83,920.00
7	94,680.00
8	105,440.00
9	116,200.00
10	126,960.00
11	137,720.00
12	148,480.00
13	159,240.00
14	170,000.00

Contact Paige
pstuckey@cvclubs.org
for questions or concerns

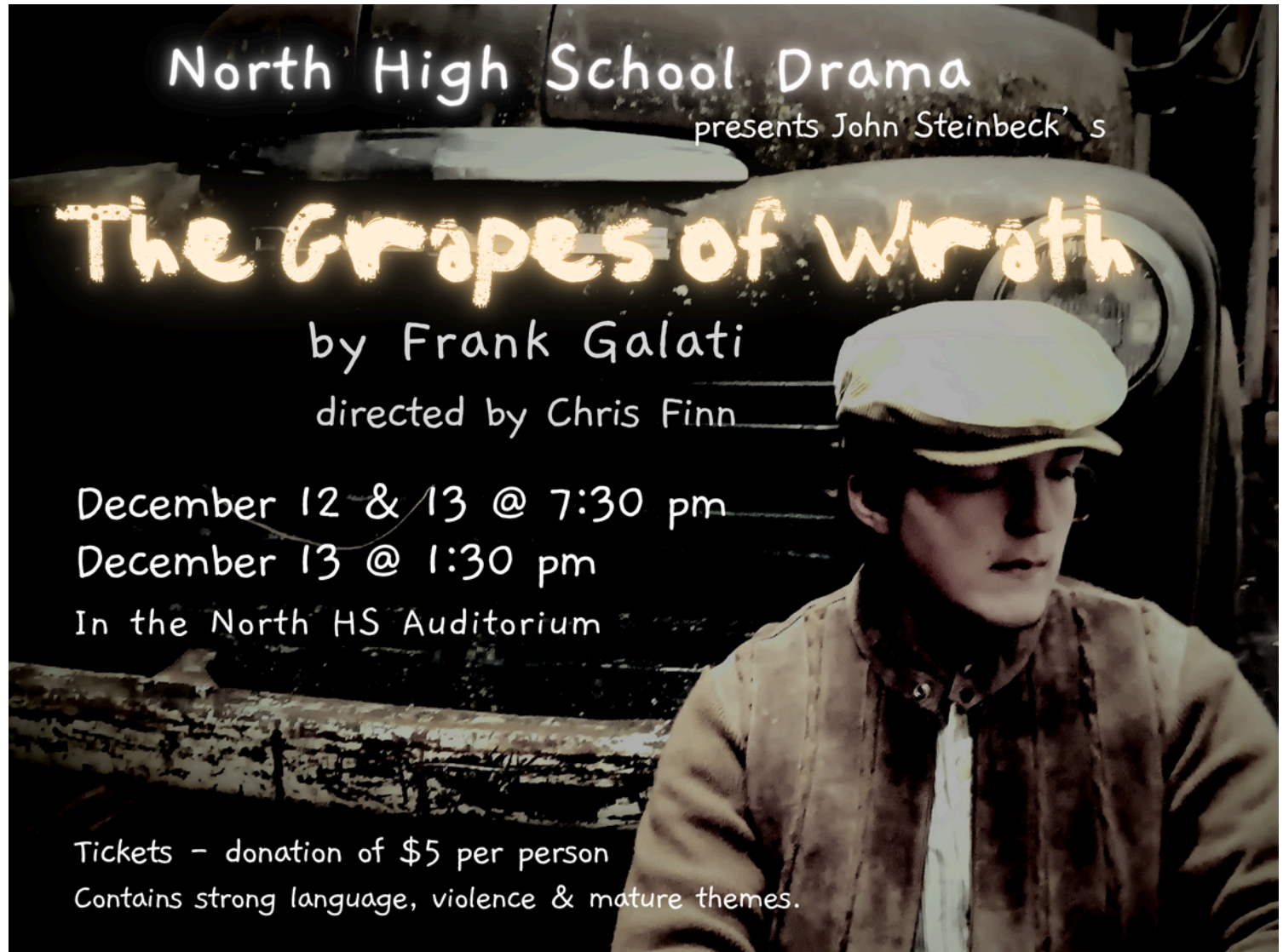
Eau Claire Boys & Girls Club
1005 Oxford Ave
Eau Claire, WI 54703



Scan for Application

Announcements

Events Happening Across ECASD!



North High School Drama
presents John Steinbeck's

The Grapes of Wrath

by Frank Galati
directed by Chris Finn

December 12 & 13 @ 7:30 pm
December 13 @ 1:30 pm
In the North HS Auditorium

Tickets - donation of \$5 per person
Contains strong language, violence & mature themes.



Announcements

Black Parent Teacher Association Interest Meeting December 11

All ECASD families and staff are invited to learn more about and participate in a district-wide Black Parent Teacher Association (PTA) interest meeting. Calling all Black teachers, staff, and parents of Black & Biracial students in the district, as well as all interested family members or staff, join the meeting to discuss the formation of a Black Parent Teacher Association on Thursday, December 11 at 4:30pm at Manz Elementary. Light refreshments will be served.



Black PTA Interest Meeting

*You are invited to the Inaugural Black PTA
Interest Meeting*

Where: Manz Elementary Library
1000 E Fillmore Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54701

Date: Thursday December 11th **Time:** 5pm-630pm
(mixer and light refreshments starting at 430pm)

Calling all Black Teachers, Staff and Parents of Black and Biracial children in the Eau Claire area school district. Join us to discuss the formation of a Black Parent Teacher Association.

Scan the QR
code to for more
information



Announcements



2025-26 Webinar Series

For Parents, Caregivers & School Staff



If you think your child or student could benefit from skill building and/or mental health support, Cartwheel is here to help.

[Learn More](#)

Cartwheel's free webinar series provides caregivers and school staff with practical tools to support student and family wellness and mental health. **Can't attend live? [Register](#) to get the replay.**

Sept 17 at 12pm ET

You Are Not Alone: Strategies for Parents & Caregivers to Support Their Children's Mental Health

Christine M. Crawford, M.D., M.P.H.

► [Register Here](#)

Oct 8 at 12pm ET

From Conflict to Connection: How Families and Schools Can Work Together to Break the Cycle of Bullying

Fabian Ramirez

► [Register Here](#)

Nov 12 at 12pm ET

Student Assessments & Evaluations: When To Seek Them, What To Know, And How To Make Sense Of Them

Ellen Braaten, Ph.D.

► [Register Here](#)

Dec 10 at 12pm ET

Talking to Children About Grief and Loss in Developmentally Friendly Ways

Mekel Harris, Ph.D.

Jan 14 at 7pm ET

Building Resilience and Emotional Exposure in Kids

Alex Hirshberg, Psy.D.

► [Register Here](#)

Feb 11 at 12pm ET

Promoting Healthy Relationships with Food and Body in Schools

Dana Sedlak, LCSW, CEDS-C

► [Register Here](#)

Mar 11 at 12pm ET

Navigating the Tough Talks: Strategies for Talking to Teens about Substance Use

Amy McCarthy Baluch, LICSW

► [Register Here](#)

Apr 15 at 12pm ET

5 Keys to Parenting a Child with ADHD

Erin Schoenfelder Gonzalez, Ph.D.

► [Register Here](#)

May 12 at 7pm ET

Learning How to Recognize and Treat Youth with OCD and Related Disorders

Erica Greenberg, M.D.

► [Register Here](#)

June 4 at 12pm ET

Supporting Boys: Mental Health Strategies for Young Men

Chris Smith

► [Register Here](#)



Cartwheel partners with schools to provide a evidence-based telehealth services for students, families, and school staff through 1:1 teletherapy, psychiatry, family therapy, parent guidance, and staff therapy. Learn more at:

www.cartwheel.org/families

View the full webinar calendar [here](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Opportunities

- Our next **Polar Party is Friday, December 12, and we are looking for volunteers!** At Polar Parties, students can socialize with peers and enjoy a variety of activities. Your main role would be to aid staff in student supervision. We are looking for ten volunteers to help from 2:45–4:15pm. If you'd like to volunteer, please sign up using this [link](#).
- All volunteers must fill out the ECASD Volunteer Agreement yearly and complete a background check with ECASD once every three years. We will follow up with you after signing up to let you know what you need!
- Q3 and Q4 Polar Parties are scheduled for February 13 and April 17, 2026.

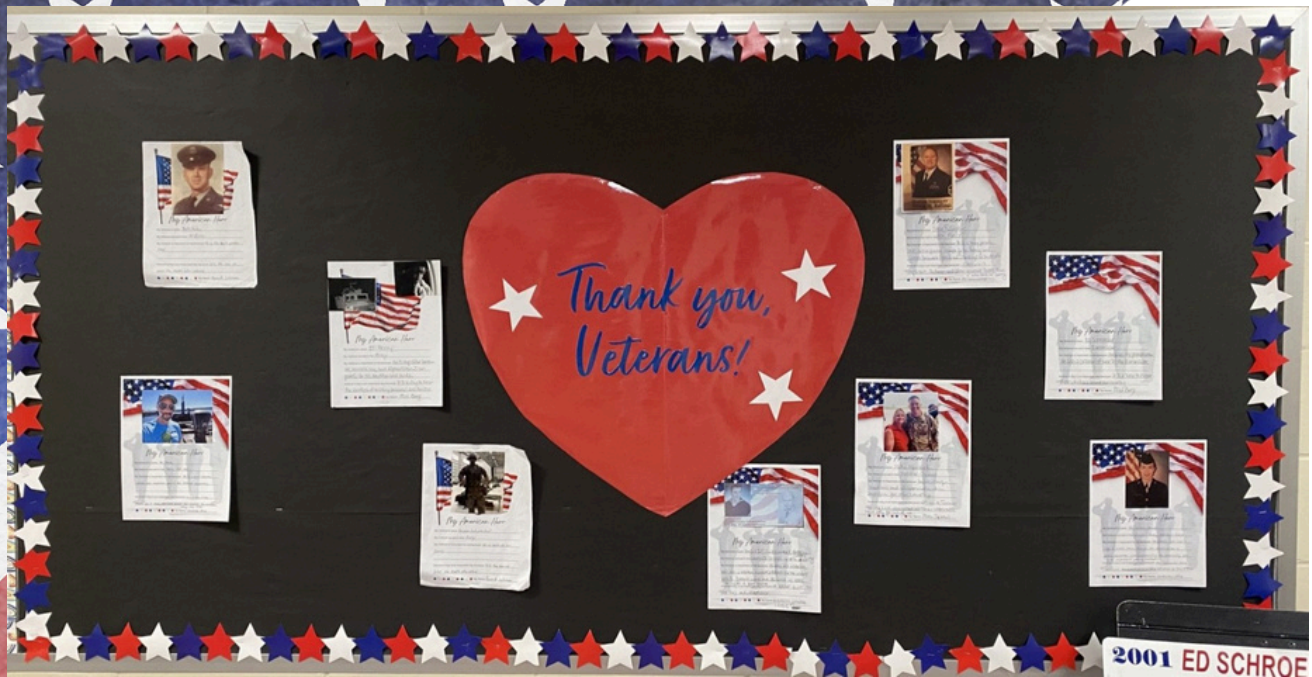
FAC Representatives

- Northstar is seeking two people to **serve as a representative on the ECASD Family Advisory Council (FAC)** this school year. School FAC representatives should be able and willing to attend monthly meetings, be in contact with our PTSA and our school community, and represent the general voice of our parents. You can learn more about FAC [here](#).
- If you are interested in becoming a FAC representative, please contact Adam Keeton at akeeton@ecasd.us or 715-852-5110.



Thank you,
Volunteers!

Polar Highlights



Northstar recognized Veteran's Day by honoring veteran friends and family members of current Polars on the bulletin board above. We also thank two current Polar staff for their service. **Mr. Hardy** served in the US Navy from 2003-2007. He was stationed at Pearl Harbor aboard the submarine USS Key West SSN 722. He was a Nuclear Machinist Mate Second Class. **Ms. Witkus-James** served in the Wisconsin Army National Guard from 1992 to 2000 in the 264th Engineer Group out of Chippewa Falls as an automated logistical specialist. She worked in the motor pool - dispatching vehicles, ordering parts, and scheduling maintenance on vehicles. **Thank you, Mr. Hardy, Ms. Witkus-James, and all veterans for your sacrifice and service.**



Polar Highlights

Mr. Rynes class CRUSHED their monthly reading goal and were rewarded with some game time in the library at the end of October.



Polar Highlights

Congratulations to the Quarter 1 E² Award recipients! The E² Award recognizes students who exemplify exceptional effort and excellence. Each student awarded was chosen by a staff member to be recognized. Congratulations, Polars! Keep up the great work.



6th Grade

Hailey A. – Ms. Benedict
Samantha B. – Ms. Krenzelo
Lincoln C. – Ms. Moldenahuer
Roxanne C. – Ms. Schwamberger
Zhavieon D. – Ms. Fromm
Perry F. – Mr. Burg
Jacquellyn F. – Ms. Berg
Thunder G. – Officer Xiong
Cameron H. – Ms. Zeidel
Oakleigh K. – Ms. Hilden
Dominik L. – Ms. Gust
Edison M. – Ms. Nadeau
Isla O. – Mr. Schaefer
Brooklyn P. – Ms. Sproul
Jackson R. – Ms. Peplinski
Inara S. – Mr. Klay
Alixandra S. – Mr. Rynes
Ronny T. – Mr. Tuvey
Elizabeth T. – Mr. Holle
Taylor X. – Ms. Steffen
Pazao V. – Ms. Olson
Jimmie Y. – Ms. Moua

7th Grade

Liam B. – Mr. Jacobsen
Marcus B. – Ms. Metry
Chloe B. – Ms. Prochnow
Asa C. – Ms. Hall
Kaash D. – Mr. McCaleb
Tony E. – Ms. Xiong
Jasper J. – Ms. Schemenauer
Susan K. – Mr. Brown
Lucas L. – Mr. Hardy
Spruce L. – Ms. Szymanski
Charlotte M. – Mr. Rahn
Ethan M. – Ms. Stran
Logan M. – Ms. Brommer
Gabriel P. – Ms. Marcoe
Carter S. – Ms. Fagan
Lincoln S. – Ms. Anderson
Mila T. – Mr. Damico

8th Grade

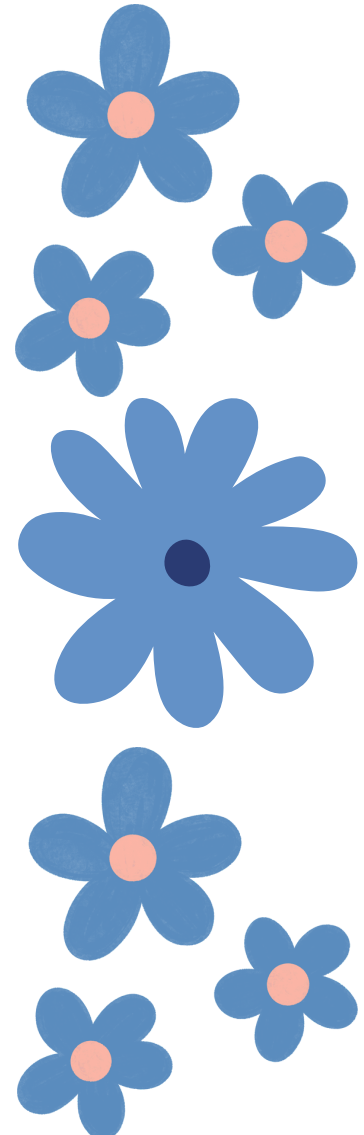
Ishani B. – Ms. Dunbar
Adeline B. – Ms. Irwin
Ella C. – Ms. Rettke
Cullen D. – Mr. Keeton
Eden H. – Ms. Alger
Hailey H. – Ms. Bellendorf
Ryan L. – Ms. James
Aaron M. – Mr. Behnke
Aiden Q. – Ms. Mickelson
Austin S. – Mr. Jablonske
Katie S. – Ms. McCabe
Skylar S. – Ms. Salazar
Gabriel T. – Mr. Nicholson
Theodore V. – Mr. Jolley
Kyle V. – Ms. Schwamberger
Kongmeng Y. – Mr. Tichey



Well
done!

Polar Highlights

We're officially into the second quarter of the school year! Polars celebrated Quarter 1 and got ready for Quarter 2 with a School Kickoff on November 14.



Polar Highlights

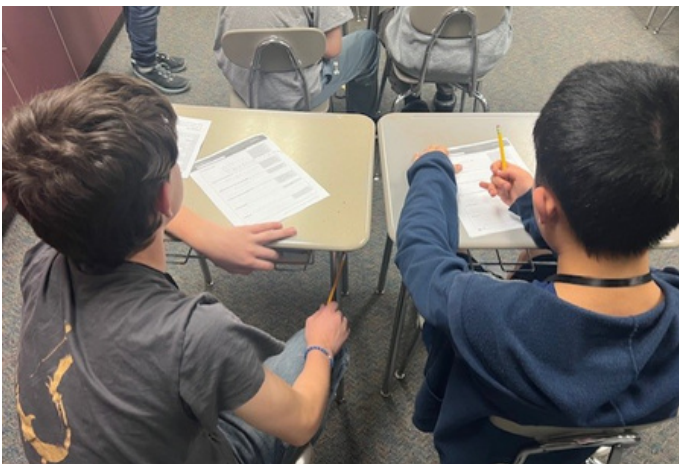


8th Grade Cross Country team members celebrated a teammate's PR to end the season by watching Mr. Holle shave his beard live! This was an agreement he may or may not remember making. 😊



Polar Highlights

8th graders recently participated in JA in a Day, a career exploration event organized by Junior Achievement of Wisconsin Northwest Area and School Counselor, Ms. Berg. Students heard from a keynote speaker, Dr. Sunem Beaton-Garcia, President of CVTC, attended a career fair, entrepreneur panel, received lessons in soft skills, resume, and interview tips, and took a field trip to various businesses in the Eau Claire community.



Polar Highlights



Students had great school spirit on Black Out Day the Friday before Thanksgiving Break!

Northstar has recently started partnering with Earthbound Organics to compost during lunch, and Polars are off to a great start! You can learn more [here](#).

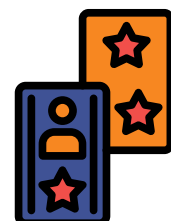


NORTHSTAR COLLECTS!



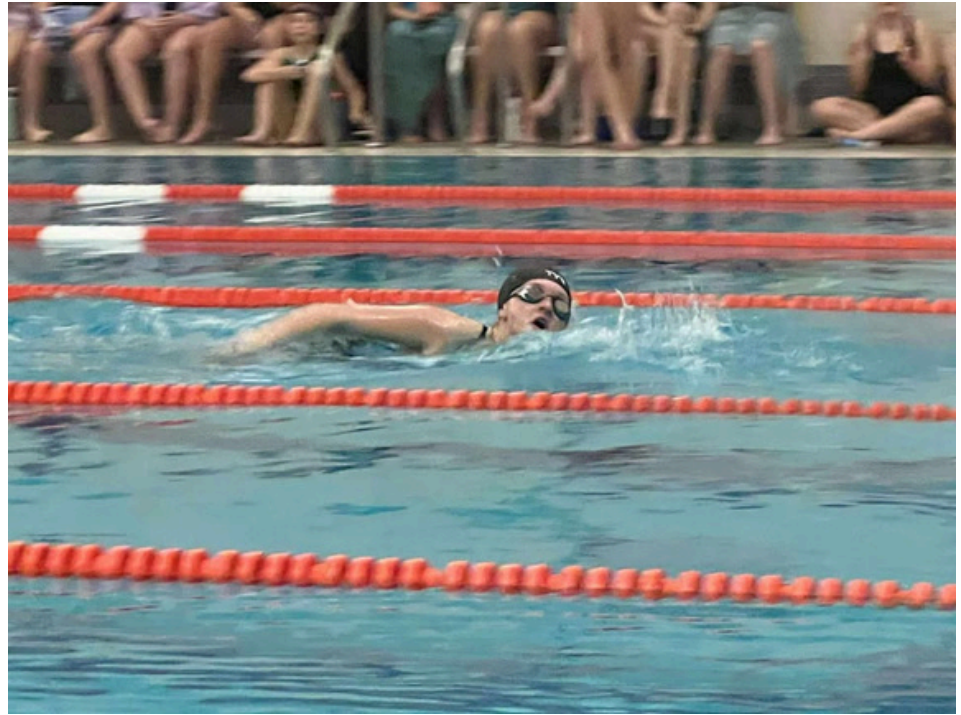
Does your student have a collection and want to show us? Just grab an application from the library, have a parent/guardian sign it, and the library will help you set it up.

Let everyone see what Northstar collects! Currently on display is 6th grader Olive's collection of 3D printed animals and 7th grader Aden's collection of Yu-Gi-Oh trading cards!



Polar Highlights

Quarter 2 athletic competitions have begun! Here are a few photos from the 1st girls swimming meet on November 18. You can view all athletic competition schedules on our website [here](#).



Important Links

<u>Northstar Middle School Website</u>	<u>ECASD 2025-26 School Year Calendar</u>
<u>December Lunch Menu</u>	<u>ECASD Community Events and Resources</u>
<u>Skyward Family Access</u> • Check Grades • Report an Absence • Update Contact Information • And More!	<u>Tech Support & Resources</u> • Student Device Support • How to set-up a parent observer account in Canva
<u>Northstar Kitchen Cupboard Order Form</u> • Submit by Monday 8am • Pick up from Main Office Tuesday-Friday, 7am-3:30pm	<u>Northstar PTSA Information</u>
<u>My School Bucks</u> • Check balance and deposit money into your child's lunch account	<u>Who Should I Contact at Northstar with Questions?</u>