



Bright Spots and Big Moments in Mapleton

Friday, Feb. 6, 2026

Welcome to **Spark! Bright Spots and Big Moments**, your biweekly roundup of feel-good stories, standout moments, and celebrations from around Mapleton. From student achievements to staff highlights, this community newsletter is all about what makes Mapleton shine.

Spark stories:

Bright Spots: Shout-outs and recognitions

Big Moments: Experiences, milestones, and celebrations

Behind the Spark: Staff profiles or features

Community Connections: Events, partnerships, family highlights

High Fives!

[Share your good news!](#)

[Send a "High Five"!](#)

Bright Spots



Skyview wrestler Ariyah A. signs to compete at the collegiate level

The Skyview Student Center was filled with pride Tuesday as **Mapleton Early Career Prep senior and wrestling captain Ariyah A. signed her Letter of Intent** to compete at the collegiate level.

Surrounded by family, friends, coaches, and teammates, Ariyah committed to wrestle for Doane University, in Crete, Nebraska, marking the next chapter of her athletic and academic journey.

Since joining the Skyview wrestling program as a sophomore, Ariyah has earned more than 120 career wins and served as a three-time team captain. She also helped bring home a state trophy for Mapleton, finishing as the state runner-up in her weight class in each of the past two seasons.

"I'm super proud of who she is," said head coach Randy Lomeli. "She completely bought into what we were doing here."

Congratulations, Ariyah! Mapleton is proud of you and excited to see what's next.

Explore Primary TOPPING OUT CEREMONY

Wednesday, Feb. 11 | 4-4:30 p.m.



Explore Primary | Next to Explore PK-8
10310 York St., Thornton, 80229

You're invited! Explore Primary Topping Out Ceremony

A topping out ceremony is a construction tradition marking the placement of the final, highest structural beam in a new building, celebrating the completion of the structural frame. This ceremony signifies a major project milestone!

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 11

Time: 4-4:30 p.m.

Location: 10310 York Street, Thornton, 80229

Explore Primary opening August 2027!

The new Explore Primary School building was made possible through the community-supported mill levy passed in 2022. JHL Constructors and Hord Coplan Macht, the same teams behind the design and construction of Explore PK-8, are once again partnering with Mapleton Public Schools to bring this vision to life. The result is a 45,000-square-foot facility thoughtfully designed to support our community's youngest learners.

Explore Primary will offer a warm, welcoming environment, featuring pastel colors, lighter wood tones, muted carpets, and polished concrete floors. The building will include dedicated spaces for a library, music and gym classes, and a café. In recognition of the site's rich farmland history, playful barnyard animal elements will be woven throughout the design.

The current Explore building will undergo a thoughtful renovation to serve students in grades 2-8. Together, these two facilities are designed to grow alongside the community, supporting students from their very first steps in school through their middle years.

Eighth graders explore high school options at Highway to High School

Mapleton eighth graders got a preview of high school life at the district's annual Highway to High School Fair, held last month at the Skyview Student Center.

As a district of choice, Mapleton allows eighth graders to select the high school that best aligns with their interests and goals for ninth grade. At the fair, students explored what makes each school unique through student-led experiences and hands-on demonstrations.



Current high school students highlighted Career and Technical Education programs with activities such as robotics demonstrations, hands-on CPR training, and live art displays. Eighth graders also had the opportunity to speak directly with students and staff, ask questions, and learn more about academics, extracurricular opportunities, and daily life at each school.

Families are encouraged to talk with their eighth grader about what stood out at the fair and submit their school selection through [the Annual Update](#) by **next Friday, Feb. 13**, for the best chance of placement in their first-choice school.

Big Moments



Mapleton crowns new Spelling Bee champion

Mapleton has a new Spelling Bee champion! Jeancarlo M., a seventh-grade student from Meadow Community School, took first place after 11 rounds by correctly spelling the word "materialistic."

"I was so surprised when I won," Jeancarlo said. "I thought I was going to get out earlier, so it means a lot to me. I came just for the fun of it."

As the competition narrowed, the evening featured a suspenseful back-and-forth battle for second and third place. Kai L., a seventh-grade student from Explore PK-8, finished in second place, while William B., a fifth-grade student from Valley View Innovation School, earned third.

All three finalists will advance to the State Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 7, representing Mapleton at the next level.

Thank you to Mapleton families and staff for helping create a memorable evening that celebrated student voice, confidence, and academic excellence.

Three Global Leadership Academy FBLA students qualify for state

Three students from Global Leadership Academy (GLA) qualified for the Colorado FBLA State Leadership Conference following strong performances at their district competition held at

Longmont High School last Saturday.

Andrea G., a sophomore, placed third in Digital Animation after producing and presenting an animated video focused on effective presentation skills. Aaron M., a junior, earned second place in Data Analysis with a project examining data related to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, including athlete participation and ticket sales. Shantelle C., a senior, placed third in Broadcast Journalism, producing a news-style video highlighting GLA's participation in a snowboarding and life skills program.



All six members of GLA's FBLA team competed at districts, with students preparing for their events since September.

The State Leadership Conference will be held April 2–4 at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center.

Congratulations to all FBLA district competitors, and best of luck to Andrea, Aaron, and Shantelle at state!

Barbie bungee jump brings math to life at Global Intermediate Academy

Come on Barbie, let's go bungee!

Eighth-grade students in Ms. Amber Wilcox's math classes at Global Intermediate Academy recently turned a familiar toy into a hands-on math and science challenge through a Barbie Bungee Jump project.



Working in small groups, students calculated how many rubber bands a Barbie doll would need to safely bungee jump from the second level of the school and stop within a four-inch target zone on the main floor. To solve the problem, students measured, tested, and adjusted their predictions while exploring concepts such as gravity, weight, and elasticity. Dolls of different weights added an extra layer of problem-solving.

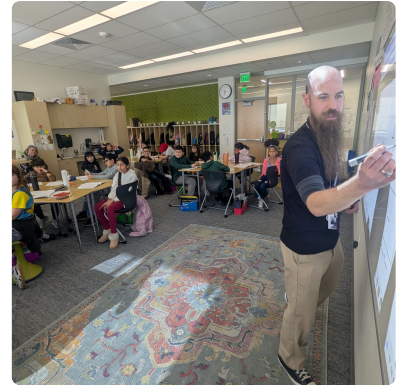
The project was supported by a Marchi Mini Grant from the Mapleton Education Foundation, which allowed Wilcox to purchase enough materials to keep groups small and ensure every student played an active role.

Wilcox said the project strengthened both academic and collaboration skills, as students relied on teamwork, communication, and critical thinking to succeed.

Following a family path back to Mapleton

In our latest “**Where Is Mapleton?**” feature, meet **Austin Brown**, a fifth-grade math teacher at Meadow Community School whose connection to Mapleton spans generations.

From his great-grandfather driving a Mapleton school bus to his grandmother serving as a secretary, and now Austin returning to teach in the same grade and school he once attended, his journey has truly come full circle. After serving in the Air Force and exploring other career paths, Austin found his way back to Meadow, where he is now shaping the next generation of learners.



Read more about Brown’s Mapleton legacy and what inspired his return to teaching in the [full story here](#).

Community Connections



MEC Prep students explore career paths during Career Love Day

Mapleton Early Career Prep's (MEC) atrium was buzzing Tuesday morning as students took part in their annual Career Love Day, an event designed to help students in grades 9–12 explore career options and begin thinking about life after high school.

The event brought together students in grades 9–12 with professionals representing more than 20 career fields, including hospitality, aviation, childcare, banking, construction, and health care. Students learned about the different career pathways, job readiness, and what to expect as they transition from school to the workforce.

Prior to the event, students prepared questions and practiced elevator pitches to help them confidently introduce themselves and make strong first impressions. Guest speakers shared how they found their careers, what they enjoy about their work, and advice for students entering the job market.

“I like MEC Prep because we get more exposure to career opportunities,” said junior Leia P. “We get to explore while we’re young adults, and that makes me feel prepared for the world after high school.”

Submit a High Five!



"High Fives" are a quick and fun way to celebrate the people who make Mapleton shine. From kind gestures and creative ideas to everyday excellence, these shout-outs recognize those who go above and beyond and remind us of the many ways our community makes a difference.

[If you know someone who deserves a "High Five", submit your appreciation using this form.](#)

Adventure Elementary staff

"We are grateful for the staff at Adventure for hosting our students when we had an unexpected late start a couple weeks ago. You made them feel welcome and safe until they could come over to GPA. You are the best!"

Submitted by Laura Nelson

Micah Klaver, Karen Hoppis, Ali Casillo, Jeff Sparrow, and Kurt Dennis; Explore PK-8

"Thank you for the effort, passion, support, and fun you bring each day to Explore! I am so grateful to work with a team of leaders who go out of their way to help for our staff, students and families. Explore is the most amazing place to be thanks to you all! "

Submitted by Alli B.

Theresa Cecot-Scherer, Jessica Hunter, and Shannon DeGaetano; Clayton Partnership School

"Shout out to Theresa, Jessica, and Shannon for putting together such an amazing Literacy Night for Clayton. Families, students, and staff couldn't stop talking about how wonderful the event was, from free books for students to take home to the Mapleton Jazz Band (The Messengers, thank you!) creating such a fun atmosphere, along with the food and prizes throughout the evening. Most importantly, you truly brought a love of reading and literature to life for our community. Clayton is so lucky to have you!"

Submitted by Lanaye Gibbons

Submit a High Five!

Do you have a bright spot or big moment to share? Email communications@mapleton.us, or call 303.853.1020 to share your ideas!



Mapleton Public Schools

www.mapleton.us

Contact

