

March 2026

*Dare to SOAR!*

# SUNSET NEWS



## A Note from the Principal

Sunset Families,

March is here, and we are officially heading into the spring season! Our students continue to work incredibly hard each day, and we are so proud of their growth, effort, and positive attitudes toward learning.

As we approach Spring Break, we hope your family takes time to relax, recharge, and enjoy some well-deserved time together. Whether you are traveling or staying close to home, we wish you a safe and refreshing break!

We value your voice! Please take a few minutes to complete the Parent Belonging Survey if you have not already done so. Your feedback helps us better understand how connected and supported our families feel at Sunset Elementary. The information you provide guides our efforts to strengthen communication, partnerships, and our school community. Your input truly makes a difference, thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

### Our Learning Dispositions

This year, we are focusing on building strong learning habits that help our students succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Our learning dispositions include:

- Take Ownership – I am in charge of my learning and my actions..
- Independent – Be a thinker and work on my own. Make good choices on my own.
- Communication – I am willing to share my thoughts and ideas while also listening to others.
- Persistent – I keep trying even when things are hard.
- Cooperate – We work together to accomplish a common goal.
- Reflective – I can think about what I have learned and done in a lesson.
- Optimistic – I believe I can do good things and have success.
- Curious – I have the desire to explore, learn, and ask questions.
- Embrace Challenges – I can do and try things that are hard for me.

We see these dispositions in action every day as students collaborate, problem-solve, and strive to do their best. Thank you for reinforcing these important habits at home. We appreciate your continued partnership and support.

Best regards,

Dr. Brandon J. Cheeks

Principal

Sunset Elementary School

P: 785-309-4520

[Brandon.Cheeks@usd305.com](mailto:Brandon.Cheeks@usd305.com)

# Plan Ahead...

April 7 & 8 - Third - Fifth Grades Math Assessment

April 13 - SITE Council

April 20 - Fifth Grade Group Picture

April 23 - Kindergarten Roundup

April 30 - Kindergarten Music Program

## Character Strong

This month's focus is **cooperation** which is "working together to reach shared goals." How does this definition apply to how you work together at home?

### Family Challenge:

- This week, plan a time where everyone needs to work together to accomplish a shared goal like cleaning up the space you live in or making a meal together.
- Make sure everyone has a role to play with specific tasks.
- When the project is complete, discuss how each person's part was important to the end result.

## Why is fluency important?

It is important to remember that fluency is not an end in itself but a critical gateway to comprehension. Fluent reading frees cognitive resources to process meaning.

Fluency in oral reading includes:

- Accuracy, which is reading with few errors.
- Reading speed is the rate at which a student reads.
- Prosody is the skill of reading aloud with proper intonation, phrasing, and expression (Harn & Chard, 2008).

To see the full article, please click on the button below.



Why does fluent reading matter?

## State Assessments are Coming

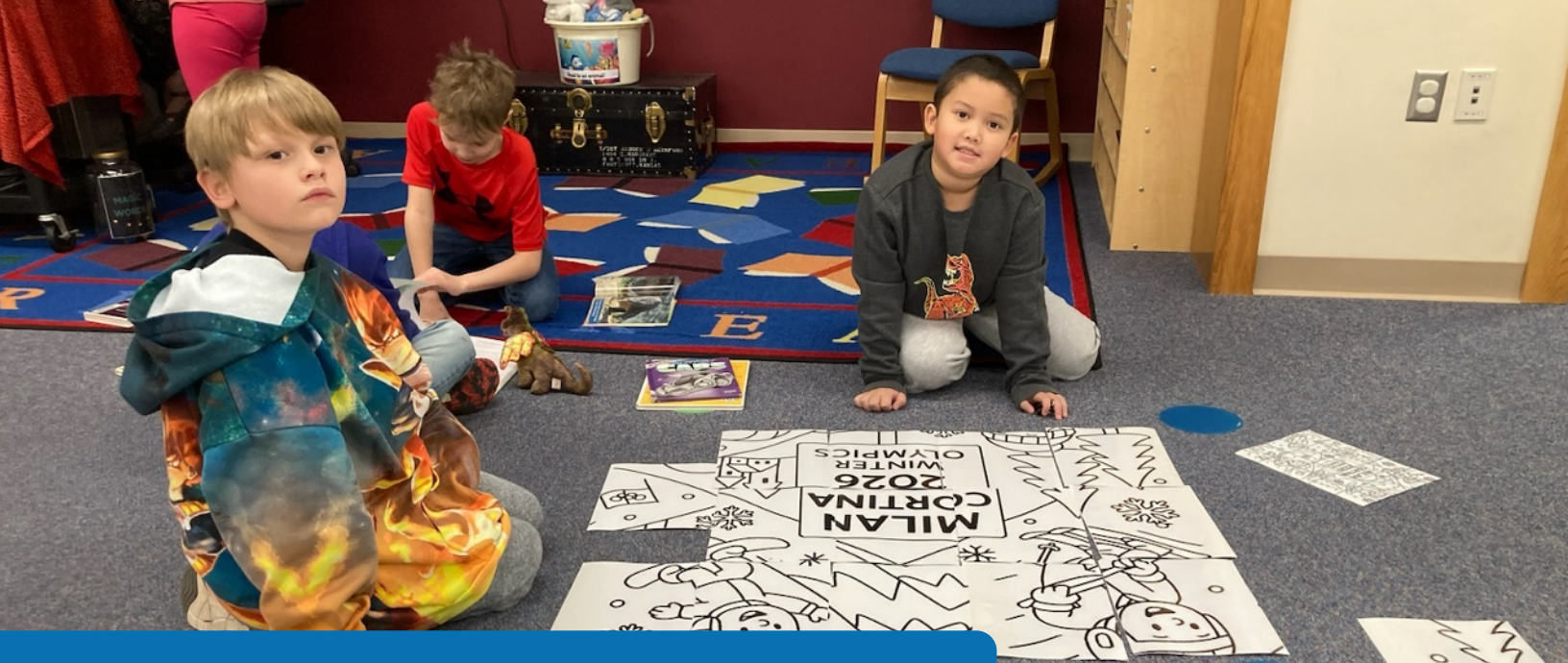
State Assessments are our students' opportunity to show how much they have been learning every day. They are a great way for us to measure both student progress, as well as help us hone our instructional practices. Third through fifth grade students will be assessed in both Reading and Math. Fifth grade students will also be assessed in Science. Each subject has two testing sessions spread out over two days.

### How can you help?

- Try to schedule appointments etc. around testing dates so students can be present.
- Try to make sure your student gets a good night's rest before testing days.
- Encourage your student to give their best effort and show what they really know!

### When?

- Fifth Grade Science - March 24 and 25
- Third - Fifth Grade Reading - March 30 and 31
- Third - Fifth Grade Math - April 7 and 8



## Music Programs

### Third Grade Program

“Forward”

March 5, 6:00 p.m.

Students should arrive at 5:50 p.m. and go to the small gym.

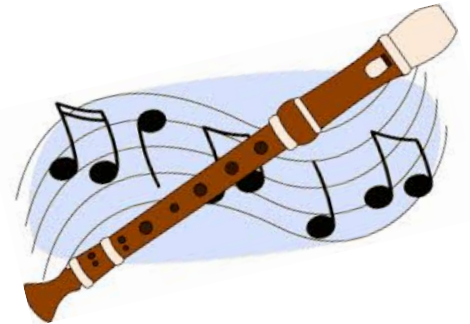
### Fourth Grade Program

“Straight Outta Fourth Grade: Recorder Edition”

March 5, 7:00 p.m.

Students should arrive at 6:45 p.m. and go to the small gym.

Dress your best!



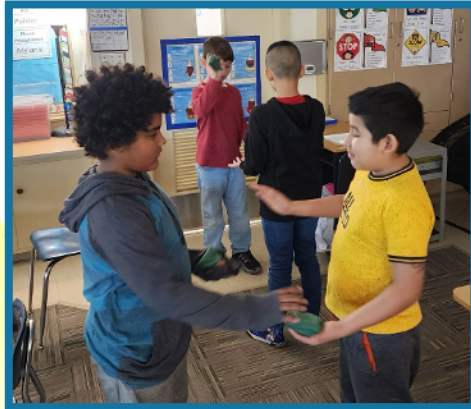
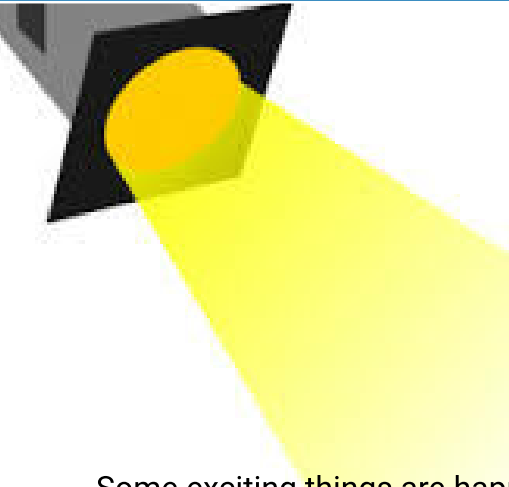
## PTA News

Thank you to everyone who has helped out with activities recently. Supporting our students and staff is important.

Things to look forward to:

- March 2-6 - Change Wars Fundraiser
- March 11 - Gambino's Dine and Donate
- March 12 - PTA meeting
- We are looking for officers for next year!

# Spotlight on Fourth Grade



Some exciting things are happening in fourth grade. In math, we are starting everybody's favorite concept, fractions! We all know how much fun that is.

In reading/writing we've been researching some very important historical figures and some of the natural wonders of the world.

The students also have their recorder concert coming up on March 5. We'd love to see you there to support our students.

Some special things that are outside our normal routines are a few visits from the great Thad Beach. He has gotten to play some fun songs while teaching us about the Dust Bowl, and longitude and latitude.

Some of the classes have also been experimenting with Bal-A-Vis-X. The class is getting to practice some non-traditional skills with this practice. We hope it pays off!



# SPS Preschool Information and Eligibility Event

If your child will be aged three on or before August 31, 2026, and meets the criteria in one of the following areas:

- CKCIE Special Education
- Head Start
- Preschool Age At-Risk

Learn about Salina Public Schools Preschool programs, eligibility requirements and the application process for the upcoming school year at the SPS Preschool Information and Eligibility Event.

When: Thursday, March 26, 2026, from 6:00 –7:00 p.m.

Where: All SPS elementary school locations

If you have questions, please call 785-309-5000.

## Greatness Grows When You're Here!

As we move into the spring months, consistent attendance remains essential for student success. Missing even a few days of school can make it more difficult for students to stay on track academically and socially.

This is a great time to refresh daily routines such as consistent bedtimes, morning preparations and transportation plans to help students finish the year strong. While spring often brings busy schedules and changing routines, making school attendance a daily priority makes a meaningful impact.

If your family is experiencing challenges with attendance, please reach out so we can work together to support your student. Greatness Grows When You're Here!

## Take Our Belonging Survey

During conferences, families were invited to complete our Belonging Survey. If you have not yet had the opportunity, please take a few minutes to do so by using the link below. The survey will close on March 20.

This survey helps our district and schools understand how connected families feel to their student's school and guides efforts to strengthen belonging for students, families and staff. If you have students at more than one school, please complete a separate survey for each school by reopening the original link.

English Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentSurvey2026>

Spanish Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentSurvey2026Spanish>

# March Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2 Day 3	3 Day 4	4 Day 5	5 Day 1	6 Day 2	7
8	9 Day 3	10 Day 4	11 Day 5	12 Day 1	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Day 2	24 Day 3	25 Day 4	26 Day 5	27 Day 1	28
29	30 Day 2	31 Day 3				

2 - Site Council

5 - Music Programs for Third and Fourth grades

11 - Gamino's Dine and Donate

12 - PTA meeting

13 - No School/Teacher Inservice



16-20 - No School/Spring Break

24 & 25 - Fifth grade Science Assessment

26 - PreK Roundup

30 & 31 - Third - Fifth grades Reading Assessment

## Contact Us

Brandon Cheeks - Principal

Stephanie Turowski - Assistant Principal

Gena Koch - Secretary

Main Office Phone Number: 785-309-4520

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