



Welcome Back to School Letter for Families

Dear Northstar Middle School Families,

July 29, 2026

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year!

I hope you and your family have enjoyed a safe, relaxing, and memorable summer. As August approaches, our staff is eagerly preparing to welcome students back to Northstar. We are excited for another year of learning, growth, and opportunities for students to discover their strengths and pursue their passions.

At Northstar, our mission is *"to educate our children in partnership with the family and community to live responsible, creative, and fulfilling lives in a rapidly changing world."* Middle school is a time of tremendous growth, and we are committed to helping students succeed academically while developing the confidence, responsibility, and resilience needed to thrive both in and out of the classroom.

This year, our staff will continue to focus on:

- Building strong relationships with students and families
- Creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences through a standards-based learning lens
- Supporting the academic and social-emotional growth of every student
- Maintaining a positive, respectful, and inclusive school culture for all
- Preparing students for future success in high school and beyond

We recognize that a successful school year is built on a strong partnership between home and school. We encourage you to stay connected through our school communications, attend events whenever possible, and reach out when questions or concerns arise. Together, we can create an exceptional experience for every student.

As we prepare for the first day of school on September 1st, please review this letter for information regarding schedules, technology, athletics, and our back-to-school orientation events. Our website and ParentSquare will continue to provide important updates throughout the year.

Opportunities Beyond the Classroom

At Northstar, learning extends far beyond the school day. We encourage every student to get involved in extracurricular activities, whether through athletics, music, student leadership, clubs, service opportunities, or other school-sponsored programs. Participation in these activities help students build friendships, discover new interests, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their connection to our school community. We believe every student can find a place to belong, and we



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look forward to seeing students explore the many opportunities available to them throughout the year.

Commitment to Student Safety

The safety and well-being of our students and staff remain our highest priority. Throughout the year, we work closely with district personnel, emergency response, and community partners to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. Students and staff regularly review safety procedures and participate in required safety drills.

In addition to physical safety, we are committed to fostering a school culture where every student feels respected, valued, and connected. We encourage students to speak with a trusted adult if they have concerns about their own well-being or the well-being of a fellow student. By working together, we can continue to create a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where all students can learn and thrive.

A Message for Our Students

As we begin a new school year, remember that every day is a chance to learn, grow, and become the best version of yourself. While challenges are a natural part of learning, they are often where the greatest growth occurs.

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."

- Robert Collier

We encourage every Northstar student to start the year with courage, curiosity, and a willingness to try new things. Set personal goals, ask questions (stay curious), work hard, and never be afraid to learn from mistakes. Your teachers, support staff, and families are here to help you succeed, and we cannot wait to see all that you will accomplish this year.

Final Remarks

We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with your children each day. Thank you for entrusting Northstar with their education and growth. We look forward to partnering with you throughout the school year and celebrating the many accomplishments that lie ahead.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer and we look forward to welcoming our students back soon!

Warm Regards,



Adam Keeton
Principal



Justin Jablonske
Assistant Principal

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

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.



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Back to School Orientation Events

For All 7th and 8th Grade Students & Families:

We look forward to welcoming our 7th and 8th grade students on **Tuesday, August 18th** from **9:30 am–12:30 pm** for an open-house opportunity to have your school picture taken and pick up a district backpack, if needed. Students may arrive at any time during the window and do not need to stay for the full event.

- If your student cannot attend, Lifetouch Photo Retake Day will be during the school day on October 22, 2026. There is no need to stay the full time, and **schedules will not be distributed on this day.**

For New 7th and 8th Grade Students & Families:

If your student is *new* to Northstar and entering 7th or 8th grade, we will hold an orientation after photos and backpack pickup on **Tuesday, August 18th** from **12:30–2:30 pm** in the Family and Consumer Science Lab (Room 555).

- Families will receive information about the school year, take a brief tour, and have time for questions to help new Polars start strong.

For Incoming 6th Grade Students & Families:

We are excited to welcome our newest Polars on **Tuesday, August 18th** for 6th grade orientation. Students should plan to attend based on the first letter of their last name:

- Last Names A–M: **8:00–9:30 am**
- Last Names N–Z: **12:30–2:00 pm**

During orientation, students will move through small group rotations with a staff member to have their picture taken, pick up a district backpack, receive their locker assignment, practice opening their lockers, tour the 6th grade area, ask questions, and start getting to know the Northstar community.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SCHEDULES:

Schedules will be released in Infinite Campus on Wednesday, August 26th and will also be available at Back-to-School Night. Due to factors like class sizes and travelling teachers, we likely will not be able to honor schedule changes unless there is an error. We have made a thorough effort to align student schedules with the course requests submitted last winter, including music, electives, and world languages. If you find an error in your student's schedule—such as a missing class in our seven-period day—please reach out to Registrar Amanda Kikilas at 715-852-5103 or akikilas1@ecasd.us so necessary corrections can be made before school starts.

Back to School Night - For All Northstar Students and Families:

Please join us for our Back-to-School Open House on **Wednesday, August 26th** from 5:00–7:00 pm. Families will have the opportunity to tour the school, follow their student's schedule, meet staff, and learn more about school programs. More information will be sent mid-August.

First Day of School-Tuesday, September 1st

The school day begins at 7:30 am and ends at 2:51 pm. The building opens for students at 7:10 am. Students who arrive before 7:10 am will need to wait outside.

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Additional Information

New Northstar Staff Members (at time of publication)

Emily Bleick – School Counselor
Elizabeth Dickinsen Karrer – Media & Technology Integration Specialist
Jon Eland – Custodian
Rosa Hoeffner – Spanish Bilingual Education Assistant
Claire Johnson – French Teacher
Macy McCormick - SLP
John O’Grady – Special Education Assistant
Lisa Paullin – Spanish Teacher
David Procise – Special Education Assistant
Macy Roberts – ML Teacher
Karlee Schultz – Special Education Assistant
Jennifer Wiltgen – Social Studies 7

Student Devices for the 26-27 School Year

All students in grades 6-8 will receive ECASD device. The device (Google Chromebook) has a flip-able screen and can be written on similar to an iPad or Surface Pro. During the first weeks of school, our technology team will distribute student devices and provide any training your student will need!

Order Photos Online

To order school photos online, go to mylifetouch.com and use the Picture Day ID EVT9NS4FZ for Lifetouch picture day on August 18th, 2026. A paper form is also included in this mailing, and additional paper forms are available in the school office. Photo retakes are scheduled for Thursday, October 22nd, 2026.

NEW: Student Information System Infinite Campus!

Infinite Campus is our brand new and real-time, secure portal that allows you to view your students’ information. Infinite Campus is designed to help you stay informed about your students’ progress, review attendance and much more. ECASD and Northstar will continue to use ParentSquare to help with school to home and home to school communication in addition to standard email.

Note: As we transition from Skyward to Infinite Campus, all ECASD families will need to update your information within Infinite Campus. A message will be sent out soon outlining the steps on how to complete this important verification!

NEW: Standards Based Grading

To provide students and families with a clear picture of learning throughout the school year, all middle and high schools in the ECASD will move to a Standards Based Grading framework. This shift will guide teachers, students, and families to better understand students’ progress on specific academic standards in each class. Instead of relying on traditional letter grades, Standards Based Grading and report cards will separate academic learning from life-ready dispositions, such as classroom habits and student behaviors. This change will help us identify when students are ready for enrichment, meet expectations at grade level, or need additional support. We are excited to implement Standards Based Grading across ECASD this year.



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2026-2027 Northstar Family Calendars

Calendars that include the Day 1/Day 2 schedule, various Northstar events, and photos from the 2025-26 school year will be available for all families at the August 18th and 26th Orientation Events. If you miss picking up a calendar on one of these dates, and would like one, please contact Northstar's main office and we will send one home with your student at the start of the school year.

Quarter 1 Athletics

An optional athletics meeting will be held during Back to School Night on Wednesday, August 26th. Quarter 1 practices will start on the first day of school, Tuesday, September 1st. Athletics practices are from 3:00-4:30 pm for all sports on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Occasionally activities will require a 2nd practice shift from 4:30-6:00pm. This will be determined by the number of participants and the activity. For more information about athletics and to register online, go to northstarms.ecasd.us/athletics. Please direct questions to Justin Jablonske, Northstar Assistant Principal and Athletic Director at jjablonske@ecasd.us

School Supplies

The 2026-2027 Middle School Supply List can be found at <https://northstarms.ecasd.us/back-to-school>. School and community resources are available for obtaining school supplies. For more information, please contact Northstar at 715-852-5100.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services School Immunization Requirements

For entry into Kindergarten through 7th grade, students need:

- 4 doses of polio vaccine
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 4 doses of DTaP/DTP/DT/TD
- 2 doses of varicella (chicken pox)*
- 2 doses of MMR
- 1 Tdap at 7th grade
- 1 MenACWY-containing vaccine at 7th grade, booster needed to enter 12th grade unless the student has received their first dose of MenACWY-containing vaccine at age 16 years or older

*Exceptions to the varicella vaccine requirement will be allowed in both childcare centers and schools ONLY if the child has had a case diagnosed by a qualified health care provider.



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