



THE PIRATE CHRONICLES

February
2025

SUPERINTENDENT'S
MESSAGE

A Season of Resilience at Alburnett CSD

From the Superintendent's Desk: Shaking Off the Frost

As Iowa slowly shifts from winter to spring, energy is rising throughout Alburnett CSD. While a few chilly mornings remain, the "busy season" is in full swing. This winter was a success for our students, athletes, performers, and staff, with Alburnett continuing to lead in many areas of competition. Thanks to our coaches, sponsors, Booster Club, parents, and fans for supporting our students.

Spring brings momentum, both on the fields and in the classrooms. Here's a look at what's happening across the district.

Community & Connection

Our district's strength has always been rooted in our community. We hope to see you at these upcoming events that celebrate students and support local initiatives:

- **Alburnett Foundation GALA: February 28th**, a night of generosity and Pirate pride supporting student programs.
- **Lions Club Trivia Night: April 11th** in the elementary gym, enjoy friendly competition while supporting the Lions Club.
- **Spring Sports:** Cheer on our student-athletes as they take the fields and tracks.
- **Coffee House: March 6th and 7th**, our fine arts students showcase their talents in Once Upon a Coffee House.

Check the events calendar on our website for all Pirate activities.

Planning for the Future: 2026/2027

While our students are focused on finishing this year strong, the administrative team is already looking a year ahead. We are currently deep in the planning stages for the 2026/2027 school year. Our primary focus areas include:

1. **Calendar Development:** Crafting a schedule that maximizes instructional time while supporting our families' needs.
2. **Right-Sizing Staff:** We are evaluating our enrollment numbers to ensure we have the right educators in the right places to provide the best possible support for every student.

Open Enrollments: We continue to welcome new families to the Pirate family and are currently processing applications for the upcoming year.

Academic Focus: ISASP Testing

Spring also brings the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), an important tool to measure growth and ensure our curriculum meets high standards. Thank you for helping students arrive rested and ready to do their best.



As winter ends, we appreciate your continued partnership. Whether attending the Gala, coaching, or helping with homework, you make Alburnett CSD a special place to learn.

Go Pirates!

John Zimmerman, Superintendent

Read On...

Elementary News

What is executive functioning?

Executive functioning skills are the brain's "management system." They help children plan, focus, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks. In elementary-aged students, these skills are still developing and look different at each age. It's an ongoing skill set for adults, too!

Key executive functioning skills include:

- Working memory – holding information in mind (like multi-step directions)
- Flexible thinking – adjusting when plans change or solving problems in new ways
- Inhibitory control – pausing before acting and managing impulses
- Organization and planning – keeping track of materials, time, and tasks
- Emotional regulation – managing big feelings and frustration

What have we been up to?

In classrooms, teachers are helping build these skills by:

- Using visuals and visual schedules to provide clear steps and directions
- Breaking tasks into manageable steps and teaching kids strategies for getting started on a task
- Modeling organization and problem-solving, including a system for organizing desks!
- Practicing routines and transitions
- Teaching strategies for calming and refocusing

What can I do at home?

Small, everyday routines make a big difference:

- Create consistent schedules for mornings, homework, and bedtime
- Play games! Two of our favorites at school are Tapple Jr. and Blink that are fun ways to build working memory and recall skills
- Use charts, calendars, or timers to support memory and time management
- Encourage your child to talk through plans ("What's first? What's next?")
- Praise effort and strategies tried

These skills build over time and with lots of practice - we can't expect perfection! If you would like more strategies or information, please reach out.



Photo taken by Alburnett
Mass Media



Learning to Solve Problems Together

Submitted by Brittany Guler, K-5 School Counselor at Alburnett

This month, elementary students have been focusing on conflict resolution. This is an ongoing conversation throughout the school year, as conflict is a natural part of learning how to communicate and interact with others. Lessons emphasize listening to others' perspectives, taking turns and sharing, ignoring small problems, and apologizing when mistakes are made.

In the coming weeks, students are learning the difference between small problems they can solve on their own and big problems that are dangerous and require adult help. During whole group guidance, students practice strategies such as telling someone to stop, ignoring, walking away, talking it out, sharing, taking turns, or choosing a different game to help solve friendship problems.

Adults play an important role in modeling these skills. When challenges are handled calmly and respectfully, students learn how to solve problems in ways that help everyone feel heard and valued. Teaching these skills supports students in becoming confident, positive problem solvers both in and out of school.

Through the PBIS framework, the focus remains on proactive and supportive interventions that help students build confidence while maintaining dignity and a sense of belonging. Behavior data is reviewed monthly to develop targeted plans that support student success and maximize learning time.

While we know we are not perfect, we are committed to continuous improvement. Each day is a new opportunity to support students as they learn to be Ambitious, Respectful, and Responsible members of the school community. Go Pirates!



In Case You Missed It...

Here are just a few exciting, recent stories you might have missed from Alburnett!



Basketball coach Jeff Christopherson earns his 400th career win.

(Photo by Alburnett Mass Media student Tori Avis, Banner designed by Kylee Avis)



Alburnett staff participated in "Tattoo Your Teacher Day!" Raising funds for area non-profit Tori's Angels



Elementary students celebrated the 100th day of school by searching the halls for 100 hidden pirates.



Don't miss out on stories like these!
Follow Alburnett on Facebook,
Twitter, and Instagram!

Middle/High School Counseling Letters from Counselors Mrs. Jacobs and Mrs. Tull



Happy Spring Semester! This time of year is my favorite, and not just because of the weather starting to warm up. During the spring semester, I get to work with 8th grade students on getting them ready for high school. More specifically, we will create rough drafts of 4 year high school plans together. In their HEX class, students will first take a workplace conditions assessment and an interest assessment. Once they complete those, they get to dive into exploring the classes available to take in high school! This is always so fun because it helps them think about what they want to do after high school (I know, I know, slow down). This is especially helpful when choosing electives, as there are classes that students can take that may be related to what they want to do after high school. If your 8th grade student has me currently or will have me at some point this semester, check those backpacks for their 4 year plans - those need to be signed and returned to me so that Mrs. Tull can use them when she meets with students regarding scheduling for next year!

Mrs. Jacobs

Greetings! High School students are meeting to go over their 4 year plans, as well as take career assessments. Some students are also signing up for Kirkwood Academies. Others are busy attending job shadows and completing internships to explore potential careers. Coming up, we have visitors from colleges, the military, and career visits. For example, representatives from the railroad are coming on Feb. 12 so students can learn more about their employment opportunities. In addition, we had ICAN (Iowa College Access Network) present about career & college planning, as well as financial aid. We also have summer employers stop by to connect with our students as well. Scheduling is next on the agenda. Please know you are always welcome to meet with me to answer any questions you may have.

Mrs. Tull



High School Happenings



As we move towards the end of the winter season, there is a lot to reflect on and be proud of. Winter activities have all enjoyed successful seasons. Boys' and Girls' Basketball teams have both had strong first seasons in the River Valley Conference, with the Girls' team currently on pace to finish 4th behind three ranked teams and the Boys' team in a battle for second place. Our wrestlers have had great seasons as well, with the Girls' sending four wrestlers to the state meet, with senior Lyni Gusick taking 3rd place. The Boys' team continued Alburnett's strong tradition with a conference title in our inaugural season in the RVC and a 5th place finish this past weekend at State Duals in our first season in 2A.

Within the classroom, teachers continue to focus on utilizing high-impact strategies and building strong connections with students. Further developing our professional capacity remains a focus, with an emphasis on postsecondary readiness for all students, including a deep dive into industry-recognized credentials.

Personally, as I move into my second semester as high school principal, I am thankful to be a part of such a tremendous community! I continue to be amazed by the commitment of the entire Alburnett community in supporting our students in everything they do. There are many great things to look forward to as we get closer to warmer temperatures and the rest of the school year.

Thank you and Go Pirates!

Thomas Trainer, High School Principal



Reminders

Support Our Pirates!

Please consider volunteering your time to the following school-related organizations and events.

- Coffee House/Not Coffee House Variety Show, March 6 & 7
 - Needed: Volunteers and Raffle Basket Items
- Sports Booster Club
 - Needed: Concessions help
- Pirate Patrons Booster
 - Needed: Musical props/attire help

Volunteers are also needed in the community at:

- Lions Club
- Alburnett Foundation
- Historical Society

Important Dates

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

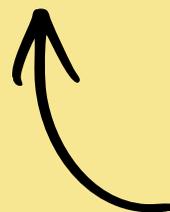
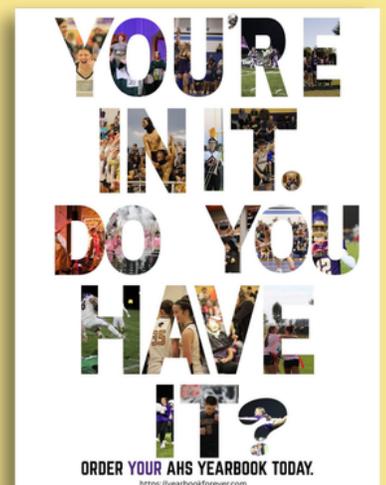
- **March 9th** — Scholastic Book Fair Starts
- **April 25th** — Prom
- **May 17th** — Graduation

Reminder, Don't forget to check the lost and found for any missing items!

Order Your Yearbooks!

One book. A year full of memories. Don't miss your chance to get this year's yearbook! Students in Alburnett Mass Media have been working hard to make it unforgettable. Purchase your copy online for \$55.

Order at → bit.ly/46cgFs7





9.3 Van Meter Case Overview

Students used objective analysis to recommend whether Van Meter Inc. should renovate an existing warehouse or build a new one to support its growth and operational efficiency.

Van Meter Case Challenge Winners!

Tyler Ge., Isaiah P., Emersyn C., Elz M.



9.4 Arby's Case Overview

Students developed strategies for Arby's to attract 13- to 17-year-olds by enhancing the customer experience and appealing to this new target market. The winning team advances their presentation to Nationals, competing for a spot among the top four teams in the country.

Arby's Case Challenge Winners!

Evelyn F., Bristol N., Georgia S.



9.3 Award Winners

Competency: Edyn W.
Behavioral Indicator: Isaak Z.
Mindset: Livia F.
All - Star: Tyler Ga.
All - Star: Ade T.
All - Star: John W.

Educator Spotlight

Mrs. Smith (Upah)

Students nominated Ms. Upah for the 3DE™ value: **Be Focused. Stay Fluid**

"Mrs. Upah makes sure that everyone's opinion is being used and assessed, while also making sure that people do their job and have a positive effect on their team, or class."

9.4 Award Winners

Competency: Taylor K.
Behavioral Indicator: Cade B.
Mindset: Ayden L.
All - Star: Jack F.
All - Star: Elz M.

Educator Spotlight

Mrs. Burds

Students nominated Mrs. Burds for the 3DE™ value: **Be Focused. Stay Fluid**

"Mrs. Burds helps us stay focused and fluid when doing our work. She has helped us many times with the case challenges this year and she is also fun to talk to."



10.3 Award Winners

Competency: Breighlyn F.
Behavioral Indicator: Carson G.
Mindset: Kaden J.
All - Star: Kylie C.
All - Star: Josey R.
All - Star: Ellie S.

Educator Spotlight

Ms. Smith

Students nominated Ms. Smith for the 3DE™ value of: **Many Voices. One Team.**

"Ms. Smith always makes the classroom an engaging and fun place to be."

10.3 Mercy Case Overview

Students developed strategies to improve the patient experience at Mercy Cedar Rapids urgent care, focusing on convenience, communication, and overall satisfaction for patients like the given persona.

Mercy Case Challenge Winners!

Lauren W., Payton S., Jassey C.



10.4 The Home Depot Case Overview

Students designed an interactive retail experience for DIY customers that highlights one of The Home Depot's (THD) departments. The winning team advances their presentation to Nationals, competing for a spot among the top four teams in the country.

THD Case Challenge Winners!

Josey R., Eaghan F., Adah F., and Kayd W.



10.4 Award Winners

Competency Award: Raegan M.
Behavioral Indicator: Izzy M.
Mindset: Kaedence M.
All - Star: Isaac B.
All - Star: Jocelyn N.

Educator Spotlight

Mrs. Harrell

Students nominated Mrs. Harrell for the 3DE™ value: **They Win. We Win.**

"Mrs. Harrell shows this value in her classroom by always keeping everyone on task so the class can learn and work as a whole."

Mark Your Calendar!



Upcoming Practices

Spring 2026

Track & Field

- First Practice: 2/23/2026

Golf

- First Practice: 3/16/2026

Soccer

- First Practice : 3/16/2026

Summer 2026

Baseball

- First Practice : 5/4/2026

Softball

- First Practice : 5/4/2026



Events/Activities
Calendar



Here's a quick preview of events to come. Stay tuned for more information!

Feb. 25th — Chamber Choir performs Star-Spangled Banner at Heartlanders Hockey game

Feb. 26th — Speech Showcase @ 7:00 p.m.

Feb. 28th — GALA/Foundation

March 6th/7th — Coffee House/Not Coffee House Variety Show

March 10th/12th — Parent/Teacher Conferences (2:30 p.m. dismissal)



(Photos by Alburnett Mass Media)

After School Programs

For preschool families, Alburnett CSD offers wrap around care that begins right after AM preschool dismisses. The hours are 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. and care is provided right here in our building. Alburnett CSD also provides full day childcare on Fridays when preschool is off. The cost of wrap around care is \$130/week.

For JK-5th grade families, Alburnett CSD provides after school care from 3:20 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday right here in our building. Alburnett CSD also has care available on built-in no school days. The cost of after school care is \$60/week.

If interested, please contact Bailey Wright (bwright@alburnettcsd.org). Thank you!



Open Enrollment

The open enrollment deadline for 1st-12th grade students is **March 2nd, 2026**.

Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten students have a later open enrollment deadline of **September 1st, 2026**.

To learn more about open enrollment or to fill out an open enrollment application, visit alburnettcsd.org/open-enrollment