



The Discovery Connections

A newsletter for parents of Discovery Elementary Students

November/December 2025

A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL-DR. MATHEW NELSON

November was another great month at Discovery Elementary! In November, our Community C of focus was "Contribute" and we held our annual Thanksgiving Food Shelf community service project. Our families contributed to the Buffalo Food Shelf in a big way by bringing in **\$1,094.12** in monetary donations, wow! The Buffalo Food Shelf wanted us to extend their sincere appreciation for the generous support!

In December, we will be focusing on "Celebrate" because we sure do have a lot to celebrate at DES and we are thankful for that. I believe it is important for us to stop and reflect on and celebrate the many outstanding people who help us provide a great experience for the students of Discovery Elementary. We appreciate all that is done by our teachers, educational assistants, secretary, school nutrition employees, custodial staff, nursing department, social worker, speech pathologist and school psychologist to provide a high-quality learning experience for each individual student. The gifts of time and talent are always appreciated. We would also like to thank our dedicated parents, families, and community members for all that they do for the Discovery students.

As we move into the coldest winter months we will continue to remind the children to wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Playground rules and procedures for cold, wintry weather and information about emergency school closings can be found in the handbook and on the district website. District 877 elementary schools send students outside for recess every day when the temperature and/or wind chill are at or above -5 degrees. Students love playing outside and we just want to ensure they are dressed appropriately, and your assistance is greatly appreciated.

At Discovery Elementary school we all take great pride together in educating the whole-child to help our students learn, grow, and develop both academically and socially/emotionally. One element that we are purposely embedding into our culture and everyday practice is that of a Growth Mindset. On the following page, we have included some information from Mindset Works on the concept of nurturing a Growth Mindset culture and some things that you can feel free to integrate into your home to help connect it for your children.



"Together We're Better"
BETTER
TOGETHER



How Parents Can Help Instill a Growth Mindset at Home



It's no secret that parenting can be hard at times. Having a growth mindset and believing in the power of a "not yet" attitude helps. Research shows that parents can have a powerful impact on their children's mindsets. The language you use and the actions you take show your children what you expect. Giving process praise, talking about the brain, accepting mistakes as learning opportunities, and understanding the role of emotions in learning are all practices you can begin today. The way we praise our children can have a profound impact on their mindset. Research on praise and mindsets shows that when we praise children for being smart, it promotes a fixed mindset. It sends a message that their accomplishments are trait-based, and tied to something innate. In contrast, praising kids for working hard promotes a growth mindset. It sends a message that the child's effort is what led them to success.

| Say This | Avoid This |
|--|---|
| <p>"I can see you worked so hard on this!"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say this because it helps your children understand you value their effort | <p>"You are so Smart!"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid saying this because it makes them think of intelligence as a fixed quality. |
| <p>"It seems like it's time to try a new strategy."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say this because it lets your children know that they control outcomes by making choices. | <p>"It's okay. Maybe you're just not cut out for this!"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid saying this because it makes your children think they don't have the capacity to improve. |
| <p>"It looks like that was too easy for you. Let's find you something more challenging so your brain can grow."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say this because it teaches kids that learning should be challenging, and if tasks are too easy then your brain isn't growing. | <p>"That's right!" You did that so quickly and easily; great job!"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid saying this because praising tasks completed without much effort paints effort in a negative light and encourages a fixed mindset. |

Talk About the Brain

The brain is far more malleable than we once thought. Teaching our kids that they actually have control over growing their brains through the actions they take is empowering! Tell your children that when they work hard, that's the feeling of their neurons connecting. The dendrites are reaching out to other dendrites, trying to connect to make a stronger brain. What strengthens those connections is practice, asking questions, and actively participating in learning. When children learn that their brains physically change with effort, it leads to increased motivation and achievement.

Accept Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

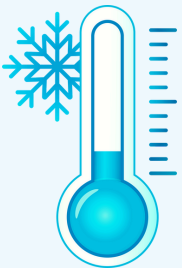
One of the best ways you can model a growth mindset is to speak candidly about the mistakes you've made, and what you've learned from them. Speak positively about your mistakes and struggles, and this will show your children that taking risks and making mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Explain to your children that trying hard things is what helps us grow, and you can't be perfect when you try something hard!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- **Toys for Tots Donations Begin**– Monday, December 1st
- **Early Release Day**– Friday, December 5th (early release at 12:15)
- **Choir Concert**– Thursday, December 11th at 6:00PM–at Buffalo Middle School
- **3-4-5 Field Trip to MIA**– Tuesday, December 23rd
- **Winter Break– No School**–Wednesday, December 24– Friday, January 2nd
- **Early Release Day**– Friday, January 9th (early release at 12:15)
- **K-12 District Teacher Workshop–No School**– Monday, January 19th

Cold Weather & Recess

As we move into the winter months, we will continue to remind students to wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Students go outside for recess every day that the temperature/wind chill is at or above -5 degrees. Listed below are the items students should wear to be dressed for the weather:



- **Jacket**
- **Snow Pants**
- **Headwear**
- **Gloves/Mittens**
- **Boots**

Please Note: Students will be asked to stay on the tar area of the playground if they are missing an item.



THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE



Our families contributed to the Buffalo Food Shelf in a **big way** by bringing in **\$1,094.12** in monetary donations, wow! The Buffalo Food Shelf wanted us to extend their sincere appreciation for the generous support!

TOYS FOR TOTS

WINTER COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Discovery Elementary School will be participating in this years Toys for Tots program that is sponsored by the Buffalo Rotary. If students and their families wish to/are able to contribute we are asking for donations of toys that elementary-aged children would enjoy.

Bank West is partnering with us and will match the first \$500 of toys! Our 5th grade student reps are going to be taking a field trip to Target to pick out the \$500 worth of toys! We thank them for their generosity!

WHAT: Toys that elementary-aged children would enjoy

WHERE: Bring into the main office to place in donation bins

WHEN: Now through December 16th



*Please note: There is no obligation to participate and we are not keeping track of donations by class or having any sort of contest to raise donations. We are just using this as a Discovery Community Service opportunity to help make Christmas a little brighter for children in need within our community!

INCOMING KINDERGARTENERS 2026-27



It is hard to believe that it is already time for us to begin planning for next year, but it is also exciting! We strive to maintain an ongoing document of Kindergarten-aged siblings who will be eligible to attend Discovery next fall, but "Together We're Better!" and we want to ensure our list is accurate.

We kindly ask that **if you have a child who will be kindergarten-eligible next year in Fall 2026, or preschoolers at home** who will attend in the future, please complete the [google form at the link here](#), or scan the QR Code Below, by Friday, January 9th.

Note: Preschool age siblings of students currently enrolled at Discovery are guaranteed enrollment at Discovery Elementary.



September "C" Students of the Month - Care



October "C" Students of the Month - Cooperate



November "C" Students of the Month - Contribute



Our Phenomenal Educational Support Professionals at DES



These dedicated support professionals assist our students and teachers daily, doing whatever it takes to help them learn, grow, and develop academically, as well as providing supervision at recess and lunch to keep our students safe. We are thankful for them!

HEALTH UPDATES



If your student has any of the following diagnoses:

- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Allergies
- Seizures

please be sure to bring in an **updated order set/action plan** (signed by both parent and healthcare provider) along with any emergency medication(s).

BHM Illness and Injuries Guideline for school attendance can be found [here](#). **Please remember to call the attendance line or enter the absence through parent portal for every day your child is going to be absent.** This helps us make sure your child's absence is coded correctly, but more importantly, it helps us assure your child is safe and accounted for. Students are welcome to return to school 24 hours after their last symptom (fever, vomiting, diarrhea), with no fever reducing medications. If your student is out due to COVID we will work with you to determine their return date.

MEDICATIONS

If you are sending any medication to the health office:

- Must be in its original container. We cannot accept any medications in a baggie or envelope.
- All prescription medications need to come in a labeled pharmacy container. When you get the prescription filled, just request the pharmacy make a second bottle for school. They are happy to do that.
- The health care provider and parent signature must accompany all prescribed medications.
- Over the counter medications require parent signature only, unless you are requesting a dosage outside of the package directions. A health care provider will then need to sign in that situation.

MEDICAL NOTES

When your child is seen in clinic and there may be restrictions for school:

- please obtain a written note from the provider at the time of the visit. Many clinics no longer fax to the schools, so it is important for you to provide that information in order for us to provide ongoing accommodations.
- Students may be allowed to sit out of physical education for one class without medical verification. In that case, they will also remain indoors for recess on that day.



Park System Plan

Please see the following information from the City of Buffalo Parks & Recreation:

What is a Park System Plan?

The City of Buffalo is planning for the next 10–20 years of parks and trails investments. The Parks Advisory Board, city staff, and park planners are interested in how residents and visitors use the parks and trails today and what could be improved or added in the system.

The City of Buffalo maintains over 30 parks, approximately 11.5 miles of trails, and a variety of recreational amenities. With growing population pressures and evolving community needs, a comprehensive and forward-looking Park System Plan is critical to ensure accessible, responsibly managed and maintained facilities, and long-term strategic investments. This planning process is partially funded by a grant received from the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Plan.

We want to hear from you about your experience with Buffalo's parks and trails. Take the survey and share your thoughts! This survey should take 5–10 minutes to complete.

Take the Survey

Have 5 minutes to shape the next 20 years of Buffalo's parks? Take the [questionnaire here](#) to let us know how you use the parks, what's working, and what needs work.

