

January 2026



Dolores School District

Newsletter

Superintendent Alesa Reed

Dolores School District RE-4A



Dear Dolores Families and Community Members,

Happy New Year 2026! What an exciting year we have ahead of us! The Dolores School District has a great team of educators and staff members working together to benefit our children and community. We hope to support you and your family in unique and innovative ways.

Celebrating Our Exceptional Staff

We are happy to highlight staff members who have gone above and beyond in the workplace.

Jack Reina

We are proud to recognize Mr. Jack Reina for his exceptional contributions to the Dolores Middle School community. This year, Mr. Reina has taken on several significant leadership roles and has been an incredible asset to our staff.

Mr. Reina has led the way in helping teachers understand the importance of Artificial Intelligence in education. He has provided hands-on guidance on using AI tools to enhance instruction and productivity. His willingness to teach and support colleagues has strengthened our district.

In addition to this work, Mr. Reina developed the district's curriculum roadmap and presented it to each school, ensuring all staff were confident in its use. His leadership, clarity, and commitment to high-quality curriculum practices have made a district-wide impact.

Mr. Reina also serves on the Middle School Leadership Team and serves as the middle school wrestling coach, providing students with mentorship and opportunities to grow both academically and athletically.

We are grateful for Mr. Reina's dedication, versatility, and positive influence. Thank you, Mr. Reina, for the many ways you support our students, staff, and school community!

Superintendent (continued)

Scott Bullis

Scott Bullis is new to us this year. His dedication is noted and appreciated. Scott consistently goes above and beyond in every aspect of his role as the elementary computer teacher. He has demonstrated exceptional commitment by stepping up whenever called upon, always with a positive attitude and unwavering dedication to his responsibilities and to the students. This is a notable quality as teachers are busy and often stretched in their duties.

His generosity in spending countless hours assisting a colleague with the winter concert is just one example of his selflessness and teamwork. Scott takes feedback very seriously and with a lot of grace. He leverages these growth opportunities and continually refines his teaching methods to ensure all students benefit. His proactive approach and willingness to improve make him an invaluable asset to the team and a role model for others.

We are grateful for Mr. Bullis's expertise and commitment to the staff and students at Dolores District.

Campus Improvement Updates

Jayne's group poured the foundation for the new high school on the Friday before Christmas break. You can now see the workers' heads above the fence line. It will be no time at all until we see steel being erected.

We will be ordering furniture for the Ag infill this month, it is surprising to be moving at this pace. Thank you for your patience as we continue this amazing project for your children.

Dolores School District Important Dates and Information

January 12: Board of Education Meeting, District Office Board Room, 6:00 p.m.
Agendas are posted on the [website](#) and outside the district office.

January 19: Budget Meeting, District Office Board Room, 6:00 p.m.

January 26: Policy Meeting, District Office Board Room, 6:00 p.m.

Emergency Closures

Monitor local media and check doloresschools.org for weather-related closure announcements. The district also sends an email and a robocall to parents and staff in the case of a delayed start or school closure.



Director Valiena Rosenkrance Teddy Bear Preschool



Welcome back Families!

We hope everyone had a wonderful break with family and friends.

Our Winter Program was such a success! It was absolutely beautiful and I believe everyone enjoyed themselves. Thank you for being a part of our school community and supporting your child in their education. We have had so much fun thus far and we're ready to have much more in the coming year!!



Hopefully we will be receiving some much needed snow soon. Just a friendly reminder that we do go outside EVERY day for about 45 minutes. Please, send your child with snow gear daily. Children love to roll around in the snow and they are much happier when they are warm. We have sleds and snow shovels for the children and they really do get down into the snow!



We have a Parent Meeting coming up on the 16th at 9:00 this month. If you would like to be involved with your child's program and help make decisions throughout the year, PLEASE JOIN US. Your child's classroom newsletter will include information on joining by Zoom or in person. We would really enjoy your company. In addition, we have an open door policy and you can speak with us in person or contact Valiena by phone at (970) 739-4244 or email vrosenkrance@dolores.k12.co.us.

We are here for you and your child!

Teddy Bear Preschool (continued)

Teddy Bear Preschool Important Dates

January 16: Parent Meeting, Teddy Bear Preschool, 9:00 a.m.

Emergency Closures

Monitor local media and check doloresschools.org for weather-related closure announcements. The district also sends an email and a robocall to parents and staff in the case of a delayed start or school closure.

Principal Amanda Hill

Dolores Elementary School



Happy New Year, Little Bear Families!

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a restful, relaxing break filled with quality family time. Our teachers are energized and excited to jump into second semester learning with your children.

As we begin this semester, our main focus is **individual student growth**. Our goal is for every student to make **at least one year's worth of growth** this school year. We use DIBELS data to help set personalized reading goals for each student, and we use NWEA data to both support those reading goals and set meaningful math goals. These tools help us understand where students are and how best to support them moving forward.

Speaking of NWEA testing, students will be taking:

- NWEA Reading on Tuesday, January 13th at 8:15 a.m.
- NWEA Math on Wednesday, January 14th at 8:15 a.m.

To help students feel confident and ready, research shows that a few simple habits make a big difference before testing:

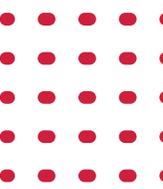
- Ensure your child gets a **good night's sleep** the night before.
- Provide a **healthy breakfast** with protein and whole grains.
- Offer **encouragement and reassurance**—remind them to do their best, not to stress.
- Keep morning routines **calm and consistent**.
- Emphasize that tests help teachers understand how to help them learn, not that they are something to fear.

Dolores Elementary School (continued)



We also want to give a huge shoutout to our **“Magic in the Mountains” Winter Concert!** All of our students did an amazing job, and we hope families enjoyed the performances as much as we did. It was truly a pleasure to see a packed house both nights—thank you for your incredible support.

A big **thank you to our PTA** for organizing the fundraiser bake sale, and most importantly to our parents and community for supporting it. Thanks to your generosity, we raised just over \$1,300 toward our new water bottle filling station—what an amazing accomplishment!



We would also like to recognize the hard work of our **3rd graders during their Viking Presentations.** They did an outstanding job, and the scripts were especially well written this year. Great job, Third Grade—we are so proud of you!



Dolores Elementary School (continued)

The third quarter is one of our favorite times of the school year. With fewer interruptions to the learning environment, this is often when the real magic happens in classrooms.

Please be on the lookout for your child's **test scores during the third week of January**, and remember that we will have **Parent-Teacher Conferences in March**. In the meantime, we warmly invite you to stop in and spend time in your child's classroom with their teachers. We love showing off what students are learning and the great work happening each day.

Student Supervision at Athletic Events and Evening Activities

Student safety remains our top priority during athletic events and evening activities. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that students are supervised at all times while attending school-sponsored events.

Students should not be left unattended or allowed to run through the commons areas, hallways, or outside the building. For safety reasons, students must remain with their supervising adult or in designated seating areas throughout the event.

Your support helps us maintain a safe, respectful environment for all students, families, and staff. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure our events are enjoyable and safe for everyone.

Dolores Elementary School Important Dates

January 13: NWEA Testing, Reading 8:15 a.m.

January 14: NWEA Testing, Math 8:15 a.m.

Emergency Closures

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Principal Mary Weiss

Dolores Middle School



Happy New Year and welcome back families!

We hope you enjoyed a restful and enjoyable holiday break. As we welcome everyone back to school, we are excited to begin the next part of our academic year together. We look forward to a productive and successful return to school.

Parent Support

As we move into the 2nd semester, we want to thank you for your continued support of our students and staff. We are proud of the growth we see each day, but we are also noticing an increase in behaviors that make learning more challenging—for both students and teachers.

At Dolores Middle School, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment. To do this successfully, we rely on a strong partnership between home and school. Your support makes a tremendous difference.

Below are a few ways families can help reinforce positive behavior and responsibility from home:

- Talk with Your Student About Expectations
 - Please take a few minutes each day to ask about your child's school day, classmates, and choices. Conversations about kindness, respect, and responsibility go a long way in helping students reflect on their actions.
- Reinforce Routines
 - Consistent bedtime, morning routines, and homework habits help students come to school ready to learn and stay focused throughout the day.
- Monitor Technology and Social Media
 - Many behavior issues begin with online interactions outside of school. Checking devices regularly, setting boundaries, and talking about safe and respectful digital communication can prevent conflicts from carrying over into the classroom.
- Encourage Problem-Solving and Self-Regulation
 - Students are learning how to manage emotions, handle frustration, and work through disagreements. Encouraging them to take deep breaths, use calm words, and seek help when needed supports the strategies we use at school.
- Celebrate Positive Choices
 - Recognizing even small successes—helping a peer, staying on task, or showing effort—helps build students' confidence and encourages them to continue making good decisions.

Dolores Middle School (continued)

We truly value our partnership with you and know that, by working together, we can help every student grow academically, socially, and emotionally. If you have questions or would like resources to support your child, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your continued support.

Classroom / Staff Spotlight

Mrs. Kiddoo's STEM/Stills and Builds classes have been buzzing with hands-on learning and creativity, providing students with meaningful, real-world educational opportunities. Seventh and eighth grade STEM students are hard at work on their physics projects, designing and building wall-hanging marble roller coasters that strengthen their understanding of forces, motion, problem-solving, and teamwork. Sixth grade STEM students explored the engineering design process through popsicle stick bridge challenges and boat designs, learning how to plan, test, evaluate, and improve their ideas through trial and error.



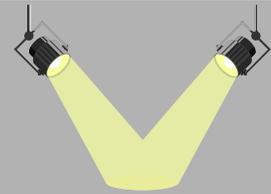
Skills and Build students have been introduced to a wide range of career pathways through guest speakers, from radiology assistants to worm farmers, helping them connect classroom learning to future job possibilities. Across all classes, students have also enjoyed experimenting with new 3D printing pens and learning about sustainability and science through hands-on experience with hydroponic systems, encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity about STEM fields.

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Dolores Middle School (continued)



November Middle School Students of the Month



The 6th-grade team would like to recognize **Annalise Cunningham** as this month's recipient for student of the month. Annalise is an exceptional student in the classroom and an overall excellent human being. Miss Cunningham always participates in class discussions, ensures that her classwork is at a high standard, and truly cares about her grades. Annalise is the ideal student who acts appropriately, is nice to all her peers, and is helpful to all. Congratulations Annalise! Well deserved!



The 7th grade team would like to recognize **Brantley Frans** as this month's 7th Grade Student of the Month. Brantley is new to Dolores this year and has fit in since day one. He is friendly, polite and kind to both students and the staff. He works hard and exudes a strong work ethic. He is always insightful and thoughtful during class discussions, as well. We are lucky to have him as a student at Dolores.



Congratulations to **Hayes Robinson**! You have been selected as this month's Student of the Month. You have done an excellent job in class and continue to push your limits while always improving your work. Your effort does not go unnoticed. You are a positive influence on your peers, and you approach every assignment with full energy and enthusiasm. Your curiosity and thoughtful questions enrich our classroom and help create a stronger learning environment for everyone. You truly deserve this recognition. Keep challenging yourself and continue being the excellent student you are.

Dolores Middle School (continued)



December Middle School Students of the Month



Tresden Rennert is our 6th Grade Student of the Month! He consistently does what is expected of him and always puts forth his best effort in class. Tresden comes to school ready to learn and takes responsibility for his work. He also brings a great sense of humor, often sharing funny stories that brighten the day. Most importantly, Tresden is a kind student who is a friend to everyone. His positive attitude and caring nature make our classroom a better place. Congratulations, Tresden!



Bronson Jensen is an outstanding student who consistently shows pride in his work and care for his grades. He is always willing to help others and brings a positive, friendly personality to the classroom. Bronson completes his assignments promptly and with quality, demonstrating responsibility and strong work habits. Well-rounded and well-liked by his peers, Bronson is a wonderful example of what it means to be a student leader.



This Month, we're proud to recognize **Ripley Lamkins** for her outstanding dedication and positive attitude in the classroom! She consistently demonstrates attentiveness during lessons, submits high-quality work, and shows great effort in everything she does. What truly makes Ripley shine is her kindness and respect toward both peers and adults. She is always willing to help others, listens thoughtfully, and contributes to a welcoming classroom environment. Keep up the fantastic work, Ripley! You are a wonderful example of what it means to be a model student and a caring community member.

Principal Matt Walker

Dolores High School



Happy New Year!

We are excited to be back at Dolores High School for the 2026 Spring Semester. Our Seniors are a little over four months away from graduation. Before I jump into all of the major events and activities for the month I wanted to share just a few gleanings from the family and stakeholder survey that a quarter of our families participated in in the fall regarding our school. We appreciate the

families who participated in the SCAP Family Survey. Your responses help guide how we improve our schools. I call it a School Year's Resolution.

The most recent survey results show strong improvement across all areas, including leadership, learning climate, meeting student needs, and overall school experience. Families rated the school more positively this fall than in previous years, particularly in how well students are supported and how the school feels overall. Your voice matters, and we will keep sharing how your feedback shapes our decisions as we work together to support every student.

Harvey the Dolores Drama Production for the fall premieres January 9th and runs through a Sunday matinee on the 11th. The number of students participating in drama, including middle school students, has increased enough to create 2 casts and have two different teams performing 2 extra performances. Dolores Boy's Basketball is off to its best start since the early 2000s with a 5-2 record and our Girl's Basketball team matches the most recent wins with 3 coming out of the break. Both teams were back in action on the first day of school. Dolores Wrestling is at the halfway point of their regular season and has seen substantial growth in the number of students participating. The first week back this Spring included a trip to Cortez and a tournament in Pagosa Springs. As your family attends events at the school please note the messages from both our Middle and Elementary School Principals regarding student behavior and supervision.



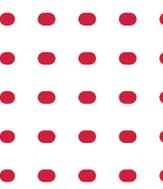
A celebration to cheer about:

the Dolores Cheer team took 6th place in the Colorado State Cheer Competition that was held mid-December.

Also, those that made the Winter Choir and Band Concert, thank you. Our students and their talents really shined through their performance.

Dolores High School (continued)

Cell Phone Survey Results



Lastly, students took a survey just prior to the break regarding cell phones. 75% of students responded, 96% said that they bring a phone to school. Cell phones in schools have been a huge topic of discussion nationally. Many districts as well as entire states have implemented cell phone bans in schools. **Cell phones are consistently the number one distractor and disruptor of class reported by Dolores teachers.** There are many factors to consider when limiting cell phone use and as a parent it can trigger emotions especially as it relates to the ability to instantaneously connect with your student or ensure their safety when they are off campus at lunch, etc. While we continue to improve our current policy I have included fact sheets on the following pages.

Parent comments/questions/concerns about cell phones [HERE](#).
Thank you again for your partnership.



Research Infographic

97%
OF STUDENTS USE PHONES DURING SCHOOL

An average of 43 minutes per day, spent primarily on social media, YouTube, and gaming

Common Sense Media

NEA POLL
83% of teachers

support an all day phone-free policy

National Education Association

PHONES PREVENT FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION

Research suggests that face to face communications are linked to better mental health.

Psychology today

SOCIAL MEDIA IS NEARLY UNIVERSAL

40% of 8 – 12 year olds are on social media

95% of teenagers are on social media

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health

72%

OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS REPORT CELLPHONES ARE A MAJOR DISTRACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

The Mere Presence of a Cell Phone May be Distracting

Students not using their phones during class wrote down 62% more information.

62%

Teens spend nearly **5 HOURS** a day on social media apps.

American Psychological Association

50%+ of kids get **237 NOTIFICATIONS PER DAY**

Some receive as many as **4,500 EVERY DAY!**

23% occur during school

Common Sense Media

They also scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple choice test

The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning

3+ Hours

PER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA doubles the risk of poor mental health including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health

RATES OF SCHOOL loneliness have

x2 SINCE 2012

Worldwide Increases in Adolescent Loneliness



Since 2010

134%  Increase in anxiety

106%  Increase in depression

The Anxious Generation



Adolescents who experienced cyberbullying were more than

Four Times

as likely to report thoughts of

Suicide & Attempts

as those who didn't

National Institutes of Health



Each additional hour of total screen time increases the odds of suicidal behaviors

Science Direct



OF TEENS WITH THE HIGHEST SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor

American Psychological Association

YOUTH REPORTING

LONELINESS

are also more likely to **DROP OUT OF SCHOOL AT THE AGE OF 16**

Loneliness During the School Years



95% OF TEACHERS SAY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ARE A PROBLEM IN PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS

National Education Association



 **35%** OF TEENS ADMIT TO USING THEIR CELLPHONE TO **cheat**

Common Sense Media

STEEP DROP IN BULLYING

46% & 43% OF GIRLS OF BOYS

experienced a reduction of bullying after smartphone bans were enacted.

Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health

Pornography Exposure

1/3 of all teens reported that they have been exposed to pornography during the school day



Common Sense Media

87% of teachers said bullying is a problem in Public K-12 schools

34% of middle school teachers call bullying a major problem

National Education Association

OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED **Suicide** IN THE PAST YEAR

22%

HAVE ATTEMPTED **Suicide** IN THE PAST YEAR

10%

CDC, 2023



 **“Brain Drain”** 

The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity

Brain Drain



All Day is the Way

It's easy to understand how eliminating the distractions of smartphones from classroom time would be beneficial for student focus, engagement, and academic success. But why do we say phones should be off and away for the entire school day?

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ONLY BENEFITS



ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IMPROVE

Distractions from phones interrupt cognition the process of acquiring knowledge or understanding—as well as the ability to retain and recall information. According to reports, these distractions are strongly correlated with lower academic performance.¹ In one study, students with a cell phone scored a whole letter grade lower on their exam.²

¹ PISA 2022 Results

² Dividing Attention in the Classroom Reduces Exam Performance



LESS CHEATING

35% of students admit to using their cell phones to cheat. Students reveal that they're texting each other answers and using notes and information stored on their cell phones during tests.¹ Although kids have always found ways to cheat, removing these powerful aides from the classroom is an effective way to stifle the temptation.

¹ 35% of Teens Admit to Using Cell Phones to Cheat

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS WHEN PHONES ARE AWAY "ALL DAY"



SCHOOL TIME OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM IS FOR LEARNING, TOO!

Face-to-face engagement among peers is important for developing social-emotional skills. Schools that have implemented phone-free policies report that students are engaged and lively in hallways and the lunchroom, rather than staring at phones.



MID-CLASS ABSENTEEISM DECREASES

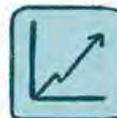
Students using trips to the restroom to access phones has become a major problem for teachers. With apps designed to get kids hooked, there's a level of competition among students to constantly be responding, sharing, and texting. The FOMO (fear of missing out) makes it difficult for students to go a class period without feeling the need to check social media.



MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVES

Research shows that teens who use social media over **three hours each day face twice the risk of having negative mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety symptoms.** Constant contact with parents can often fuel student anxiety, especially when parents set unreasonable expectations about contact and responsiveness. Eliminating smartphones from the school day gives students at least seven hours a day away from their devices.

[How Social Media Affects Your Teen's Mental Health: A Parent's Guide](#)



MORE FOCUSED & PRODUCTIVE CLASSROOM TIME

When students have access to cell phones and social media between classes, it's harder for them to refocus their focus to learning once they're back in the classroom. This is referred to as **"task shifting,"** and **is widely known to decrease cognitive efficiency.**¹ According to a study, it takes the brain 23 minutes and 15 seconds to refocus after being distracted.² For example, students exposed to a troubling text message or the latest drama playing out on social media aren't likely to be able to switch their focus quickly back to the lesson being taught.

¹The Switch-Cost of Multitasking

²The Cost of Interrupted Work: More Speed and Stress



TEACHER MORALE & RETENTION GOES UP!

Teachers no longer have the burden of policing phones, allowing **lively, engaged** learning to return to the classroom.



PRACTICING INDEPENDENCE

Encouraging independence in a **safe and controlled school environment** fosters a child's self-confidence, resilience, and problem-solving ability.



SAFETY IMPROVES

There's a dramatic **decrease in discipline referrals, cyberbullying, physical fights, and privacy violations.**



District Nurse Brandy Dunn

Health and Wellness



Welcome back, and Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable winter break. As we return to school routines, January is a great time to reinforce healthy habits that support student learning and overall well-being.



Winter Healthy Habits for All Ages:

Dress appropriately for cold weather by wearing layers, coats, hats, and gloves, especially for outdoor recess and after-school activities.

- Practice frequent hand-washing and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Get plenty of sleep each night to support focus, learning, and immune health.
- Maintain balanced nutrition and stay hydrated, even in colder weather.
- Keep students home when sick, make sure they are fever-free (less than 100.4F) for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school.

Thank you for your continued support in promoting a healthy school community.
Brandy Dunn - District Nurse

• Important Links:

- [School-required Vaccines](#)
- [Vaccine Exemptions](#)
- [How Sick is too Sick?](#)
- [Student Health Form](#)
- [Is it Cold or Flu?](#)



Contact the Dolores School District

Dolores School District RE-4A
100 N. 6th Street / PO Box 727
Dolores, CO 81323
Phone: (970) 882-7255
Fax: (970) 882-7685

Dolores School District Calendars

[Events Calendar](#)

[2025 - 2026 Yearly Calendar](#)

Download the Dolores SD App

Download the updated Dolores SD App, available for free on both Android and iOS platforms. Allow push notifications!



Safe2Tell Colorado Initiative



Make a Call. Make a Difference.

1-877-542-SAFE