

The Sterling Jet Brief is designed to provide our community with a clear and concise summary of the key discussions and decisions made at each Sterling School Board meeting. Our goal is to keep you informed about the progress of our schools and to foster an open dialogue between the board and the public.

## Next Meeting

**Date:** January 19, 2026  
**Time:** 7:00pm  
**Location:** Sterling Public Schools Library

The Public is welcome to attend

## Our Guiding Principles

### Our Mission

Sterling Public Schools will educate students to excel, prepare to compete, inspire to serve, and challenge to learn.

### Our Vision

All Sterling Public Schools Students will achieve their full potential.

## Board Goals

### Goal IV: Budget Planning and Management

**Objective:** Develop and implement a transparent, student-centered budget planning and management process that aligns financial resources with district priorities, supports academic success, and ensures fiscal responsibility.

**Strategy I.** Establish a collaborative budget that is data-driven and allows for input from principal, board, and stakeholders. Prioritize resource allocation to support identified student needs, instructional goals, while monitoring expenditures through consistent reporting and accountability to the board.

## Sterling Board of Education

Mark Horstman, President

Julie Saathoff, Vice President

Mackenzie Saathoff, Secretary

Russ Trauernicht, Treasurer

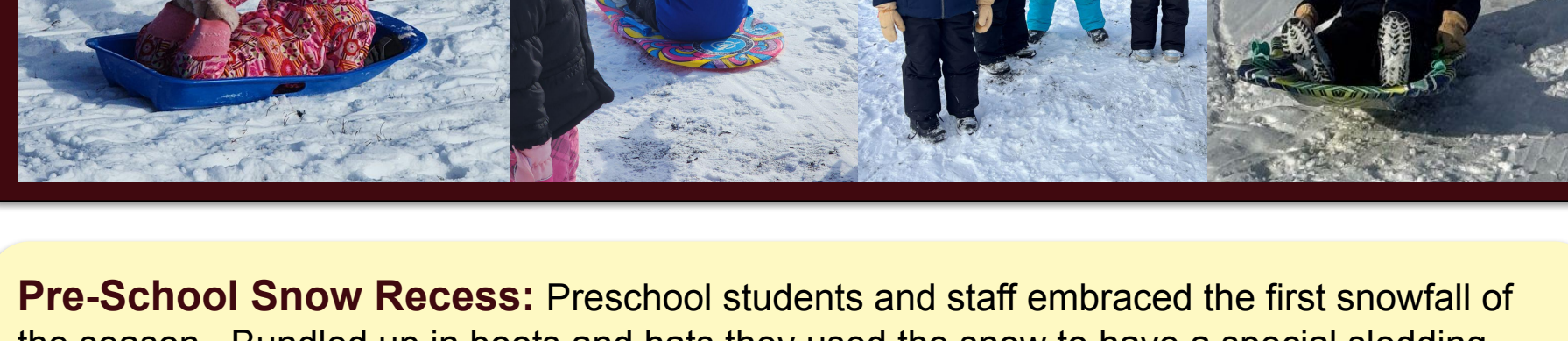
Rick Vollman, Board Member

Lauren Weyers, Board Member

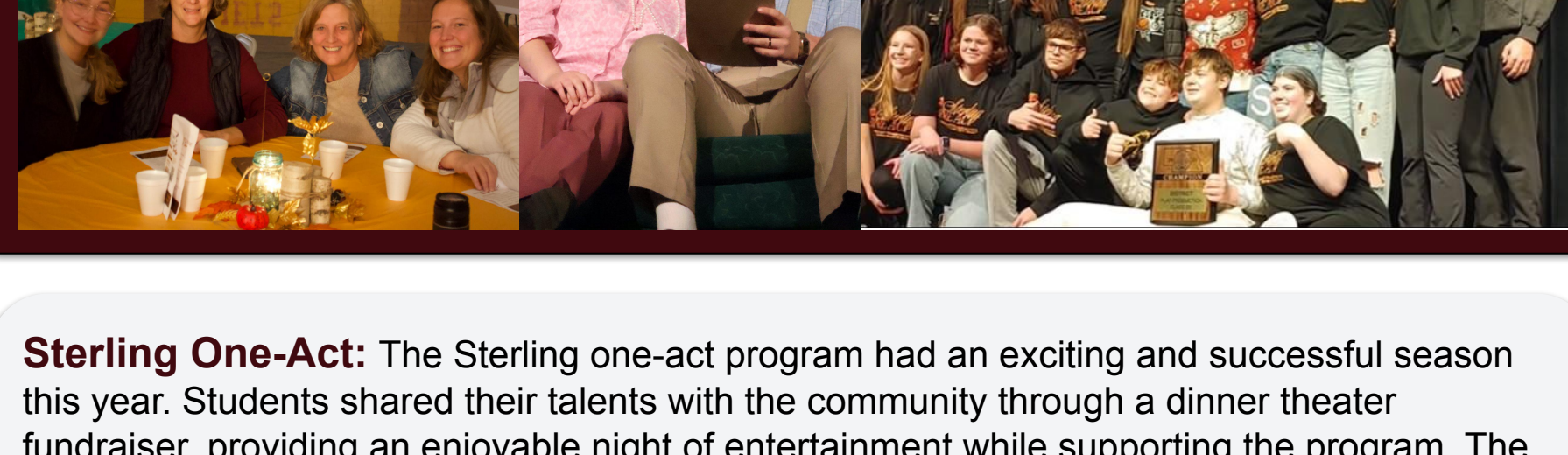
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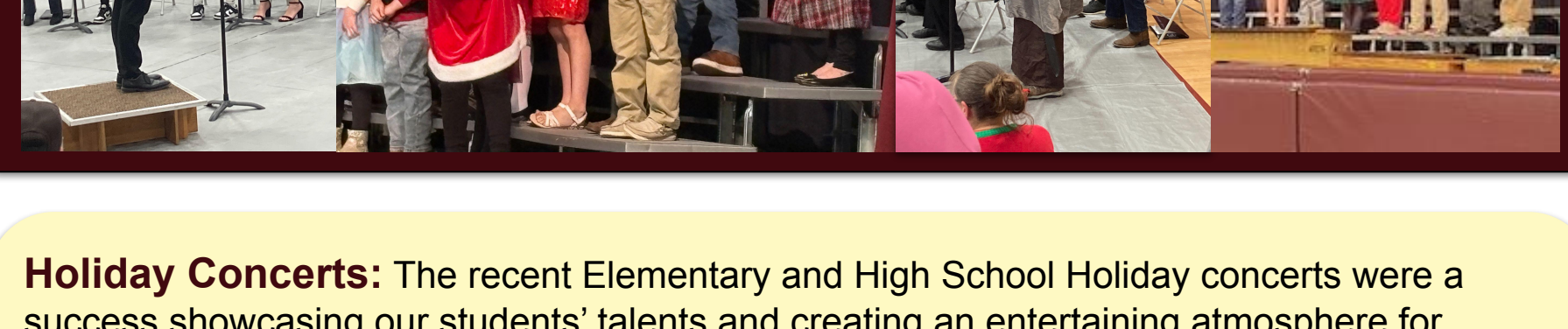
### A month in review at Sterling



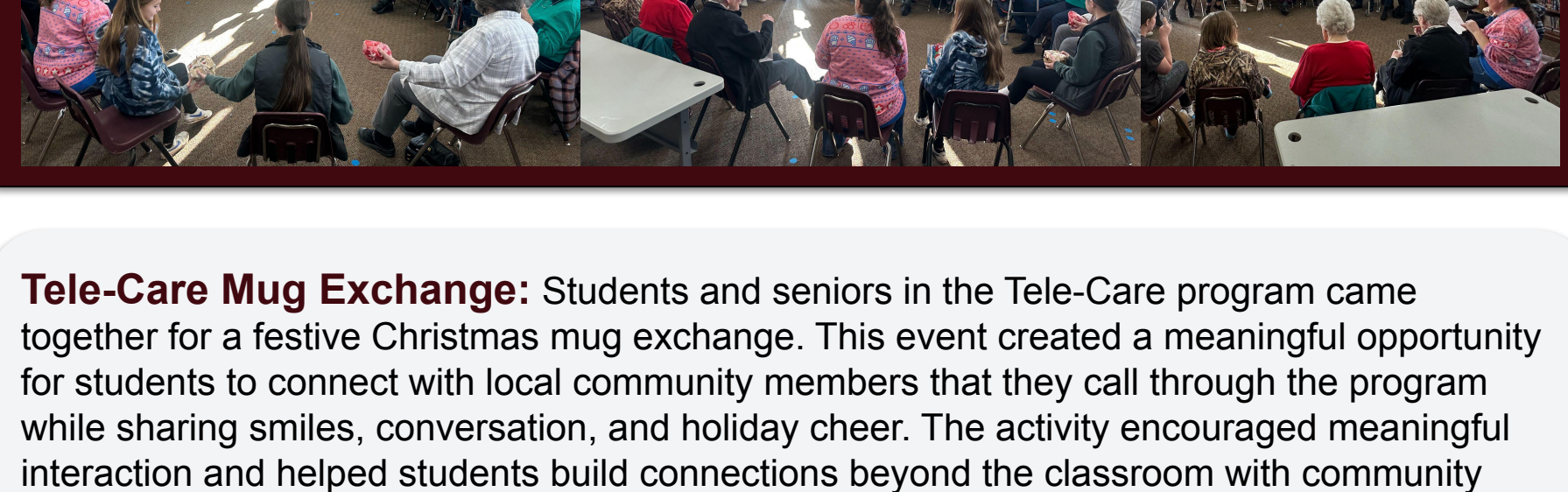
**Pre-School Snow Recess:** Preschool students and staff embraced the first snowfall of the season. Bundled up in boots and hats they used the snow to have a special sledding recess. This idea brought a little extra excitement to recess and created a long lasting memory for both classes.



**Sterling One-Act:** The Sterling one-act program had an exciting and successful season this year. Students shared their talents with the community through a dinner theater fundraiser, providing an enjoyable night of entertainment while supporting the program. The team also earned a district championship at Peru State earlier this month qualifying for the state competition. The Jets capped off their season with a 5th place finish at the NSAA class D2 Play Production Championships at the Johnny Carson Theater in Norfolk.



**Holiday Concerts:** The recent Elementary and High School Holiday concerts were a success showcasing our students' talents and creating an entertaining atmosphere for families and community members. Audiences enjoyed a variety of performances that displayed the hard work of Mr. Gossard and his students. Performance highlights for the evening featured Santa the Barbarian: Snowpocalypse, and Dominic the Christmas Donkey. These events were a great reminder of how school activities bring our community together and celebrate student achievement.



**Tele-Care Mug Exchange:** Students and seniors in the Tele-Care program came together for a festive Christmas mug exchange. This event created a meaningful opportunity for students to connect with local community members that they call through the program while sharing smiles, conversation, and holiday cheer. The activity encouraged meaningful interaction and helped students build connections beyond the classroom with community members that they reach out to through the program.

## Admin & Committee Reports

**Superintendent's Report:** A few updates were shared, election filing for next year's election is due to the county commissioner by January 5, 2026. Recent major maintenance projects included replacing an air handling unit motor and repairing a heating unit fan and capacitor. Both projects were able to be completed in house for the cost of parts. Upcoming professional development opportunities include the NASB Legislative Conference, the NRCSA Legislative Forum, and the NRCSA Spring Conference, with budget and finance workshop dates to be announced. Additionally, due to recent changes in Nebraska's paid sick time guidance, the district will be reviewing employment policies for classified staff in the coming months to ensure continued legal compliance.

**Principal's Report:** The principal's report began by outlining the rationale for implementing an adjusted schedule during finals week. As reported, this system allows students who need additional class time to receive one-on-one support from staff during the regular school day to help ensure a successful semester. The system also incentivizes students to pass their classes while ensuring all detention and tardy time is appropriately served.

The report also provided an update on the progress of winter testing, with data to be presented to the school board in January. Congratulations were extended to the one-act play production cast and crew for their 5th-place finish at state, as well as to the technical crew for earning 4th place overall in the state. An enrollment update was also shared, informing the school board that two foreign exchange students will be joining the high school and one preschool student will be joining the district in January.

**AD/Transportation Report:** The activities report included updates from the Mudecas AD meeting held on December 10. Members agreed to hold off on raising dues and fees this year, as the organization is currently \$8,000 ahead of last year's budget at this time. Decisions were also made not to hold 7th and 8th place volleyball games due to time constraints, and discussion took place regarding the girls tournament having only 15 schools in the coming years. Additional topics included preparations for Hudl cameras for upcoming basketball tournaments and possible adjustments to Bound and activity calendars for next year.

The transportation report focused on future planning and fleet needs. Discussion included exploring options for when current vans must be phased out due to upcoming federal regulations, with the timeline still unknown. It was discovered that van conversion is not an option at this time, the district will continue working with the Nebraska Department of Education to review alternatives. The district will also continue efforts to upgrade the two small fleet vehicles (car and minivan), and explore the purchase of an additional used 14-passenger bus to satisfy route needs and potentially replace 10 passenger vans.

## Action Items

**Commendations:** The Board voted to recognize Mrs. Kendra Matkins for her dedication as One-Act Play Coach this season. Mrs. Matkins's leadership guided the program to its first-ever qualification for the State One-Act competition. At state the cast earned a 5th-place finish and the technical crew placed 4th. Additionally, the Sterling One-Act cast and crew were commended for their hard work, teamwork, and professionalism throughout the season. Their commitment and outstanding performance at State marked an important milestone for the program and represented Sterling Public Schools with pride.  
**MOTION PASSED: 4-0, 2 Absent**

**Selection of preliminary construction vendors:** The agenda included that the board would discuss, consider, and take any action necessary related to the selection of preliminary site prep vendors for the bonded construction project. All proposals and recommendations were not available so no action was taken.  
**NO ACTION TAKEN**

## Discussion Items

**Policy Review:** Policies 4030, 5036, 5037, 5039, 5040-5044, 5046 were reviewed this month. The 5000 series primarily covers policies that affect student rights and responsibilities, conduct and discipline, student organizations and publications.

**Annual Audit Report:** Ryan Bruns from Dana Cole Company attended to give the annual audit report. Despite the Government shutdown occurring at the time of the audit all required state and federal submissions were completed on time. The audit concluded with no significant findings. The auditors confirmed that all financial practices, records, and reporting procedures are in compliance with regulations.

**Americanism Report:** Mr. Boldt provided the Americanism report that outlines the classroom-based civics and citizenship instruction provided across grades 6-12 at Sterling Public Schools. Students study American history, government, and civic responsibility through lessons, discussions, and writing activities that build understanding over time. Required civics components are included in grades 8-12, such as learning about public bodies and civic processes, attending a public meeting, and completing related projects and presentations. Government class explores the foundations and structure of American government, constitutional principles, and federalism, while exploring civil liberties and rights, political behavior, institutions at all levels of government, public policy, and the United States' role in foreign policy and national security. American History classes range from the settlement of the colonies through the time period of the Cold War.

The report also details a wide range of projects and activities that extend learning beyond the classroom. These include student participation in Americanism and VFW essay contests, schoolwide involvement in the annual Veterans Day Program, and service projects such as flag etiquette education, cemetery flag placement, and cleaning veterans' headstones. Students also create presentations with an optional educational trip to Washington, D.C. providing additional real-world learning opportunities. These projects both strengthen students' understanding of citizenship and reinforce community connections and respect for military service.

**Financial Literacy Report:** Mr. Steinkruger presented the financial literacy report giving a brief overview of the personal finance course at Sterling. The course has covered a wide range of topics this year. Students began the year learning about savings and investing, exploring tools such as savings accounts, CDs, bonds, and stocks. The class then focused on budgeting, including projecting personal budgets for full-time employment and understanding necessary expenses. Recently, students have been learning about credit cards, including responsible use, managing interest, and evaluating card options.

Looking ahead to the second semester, students will study individual taxes, loan and mortgage basics, and the fundamentals of insurance. Previous years' students have applied these lessons by opening savings and investment accounts, using credit responsibly, and budgeting for goals such as college, cars, and even homes.

**District Annual Report:** The annual district report was presented. The report includes Staff Information, Financial Information, Student Achievement, School Data, Demographic Information, and School Improvement Process goal information. A full copy of the report can be found below.

[Annual Report 2025-2026](#)

## Next Meeting

**Next Meeting:** The next scheduled board meeting will be the regular January meeting on January 19, 2026 at 7:00pm in the Sterling High School Library.

