

— The Winter Issue 2024/2025 —



The Husky Herald



A newsletter of Northwestern Local Schools



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Welcome to The Husky Herald!


We're excited to introduce Northwestern Local Schools' brand-new newsletter, designed to keep you connected and informed about the happenings across our district. In each issue of The Husky Herald, you'll find updates from our elementary, middle, and high schools, highlighting student achievements, classroom innovations, and school events that make Northwestern unique.

We'll also bring you the latest news from our Board Office, sharing key decisions, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities to get involved. Thank you for being a part of the Northwestern community—stay tuned for stories that celebrate our students, teachers, and families!

From our Interim-Superintendent....

Dear Northwestern Local Schools Community,

As of February 1st, I have officially stepped into the role of Interim Superintendent. I am honored to serve in this capacity and share that, starting August 1st, 2025, I will formally begin the role of Superintendent. Working alongside you is a privilege, and I genuinely appreciate your continued commitment to putting our students first. I want to thank our community for the overwhelming support and prayers through the last 10 months. I would also like to THANK the Board of Education for this opportunity. My heart for this district is big; I want the best for our students, staff, and community. Conversations among staff, Board of Education members, and community members are rooted in our shared commitment to tradition, excellence, and supporting the whole child. We are actively working to ensure programs are in place that set our students up for success. Community involvement is significant, and I value our conversations about our district's future. Together, we will continue to move forward, ensuring that Northwestern remains a place where students thrive.

A portrait of Julie McCumber, a woman with dark, wavy hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt with a ruffled collar. The background is a solid blue color.

Julie McCumber, Interim District Superintendent, Director of Curriculum & Personnel, & Title IX District Investigator

District Updates

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine is discussing the state budget for public schools, which is now under review by the House Finance Committee. We are closely monitoring these developments to understand how they may impact our district's funding and future planning.

Continued on page 3

The Mission Statement for the Northwestern Local Schools is "We prepare our students today for tomorrow's opportunities!"

Continued from page 2

I will continue to provide updates as more details become available. In Ohio, the biennium budget refers to the state's two-year financial plan, which determines funding for public services, including public schools. The governor proposes this budget, the Ohio General Assembly reviews and modifies it, and the governor signs it into law before it takes effect on July 1 of the odd-numbered year.

What It Means for Public Schools

The biennium budget directly impacts public school funding, which typically comes from a mix of state aid, local property taxes, and federal funds. Here's how it affects schools:

- 1.State Funding Formula—The budget outlines the amount of state funding school districts receive, often based on factors like enrollment, local tax capacity, and student needs.
- 2.School Operations influence teacher salaries, classroom resources, technology, transportation, and other daily operational costs.
- 3.Special Programs—Budget allocations fund special education, early childhood education, career and technical education, and student wellness initiatives.
- 4.Infrastructure & Safety – The budget may include grants or funds for school construction, renovations, or safety improvements.
- 5.Policy Changes – Education policy decisions, such as graduation requirements, standardized testing, and curriculum updates, can be tied to budget provisions.

Board Policy Revisions

While the process has been slow, it has been encouraging to make the necessary revisions to ensure our policies best serve our students, staff, and community.

Federal Programs Review: On March 11, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) will conduct an on-site monitoring review of our Federal Programs. Their team will visit all three buildings and discuss the review with building administrators.

Their team will visit all three buildings and discuss the review with building administrators. We have reviewed several key items leading up to the visit to ensure a smooth process.

Spring Athletics Are Underway

With the start of spring comes the excitement of a new athletic season! Our student-athletes are preparing for competitions, and we encourage everyone to support our teams as they represent our district. Best of luck to all our athletes and coaches!

Ohio State Testing Preparation

As we approach spring, our schools are actively preparing for Ohio State testing. Staff and students have been working diligently to ensure readiness, and we appreciate everyone's efforts in making this process as smooth as possible.

There is so much to be proud of in our district, and I am incredibly grateful for the passion and dedication of our students, staff, and community. Let's continue to support one another, stay positive, and work together to build a future of excellence for Northwestern Local Schools.





UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

MARCH 24

APRIL 21

MAY 24

All school board meetings are scheduled for 6:30PM in the High School Library. Meetings are also livestreamed (barring any technical difficulties) to our district YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@NorthwesternSchools>



YOUR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION & BOARD MEMBERS

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elementary news



**Doug Hopkins,
Elementary Principal**

Hello Northwestern Community,

We are excited as we head into the last part of the school year! Our students have been working hard, learning new things, and showing great character each day. With spring approaching, we have so much to look forward to, and we want to make the most of the time we have left. Thank you for being part of our school community and for supporting your child's learning. Together, we will finish the year strong!

Spring Conferences & Trimester Wrap-Up

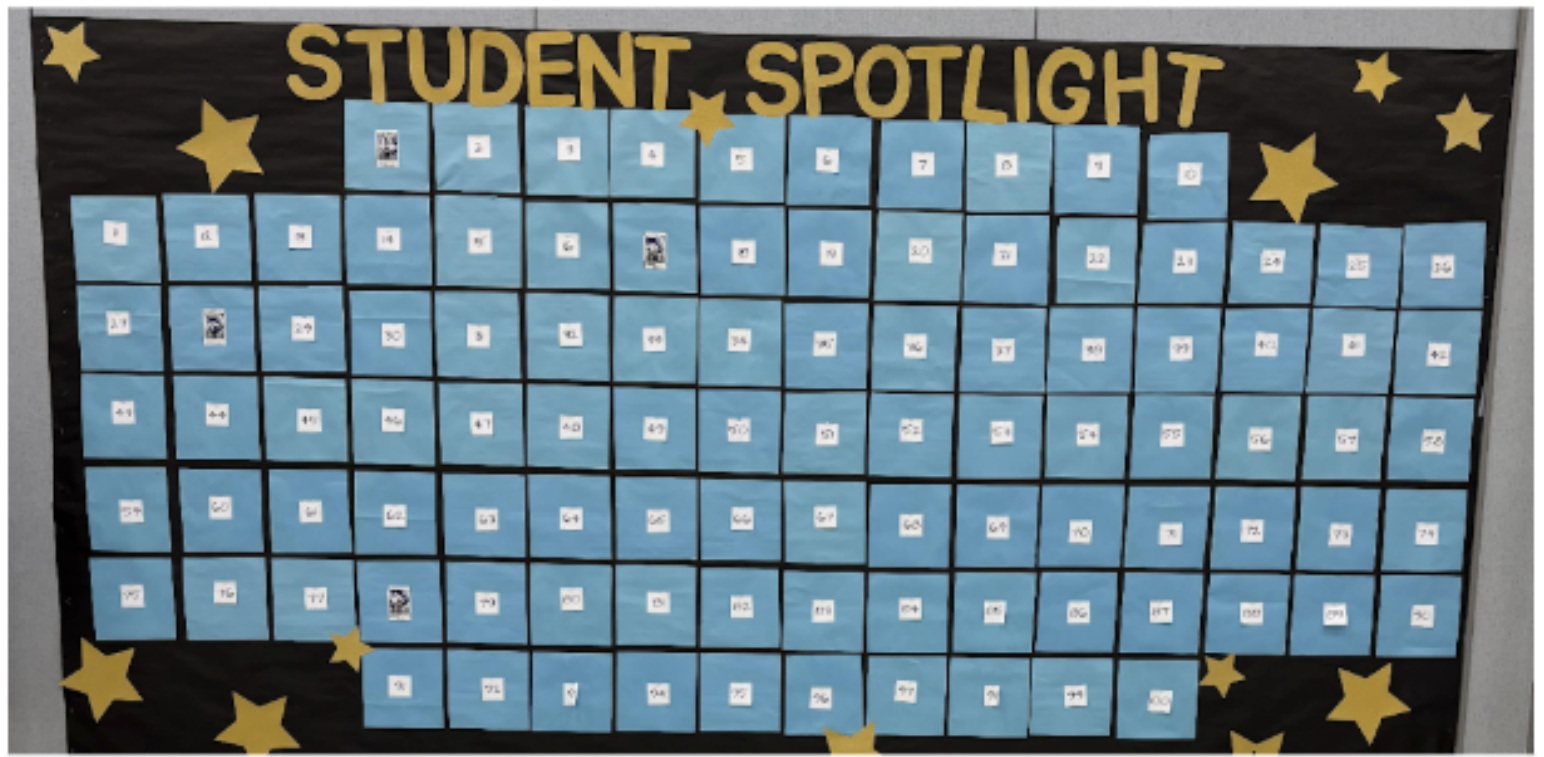
We just finished our first round of Spring conferences, and we have our second round coming April 3 from 3:30-7:30 pm. These meetings are a great way for teachers and families to talk about student progress, set goals, and find ways to support learning at home and in school. We truly appreciate the chance to partner with you in helping your child succeed.

We have also just finished our second trimester, and each parent/guardian should have received a printed report card home. We appreciate the feedback from the parents about report cards, and are working to make improvements for the end of this year and next year. As the last trimester is here, please continue to check on grades, and ask any questions that you may have with your child's teacher.





elementary news



Husky Heroes & Our Kindness Wall

At Northwestern Elementary, we believe in the importance of good character. Each month, we recognize students who set a great example for their classmates through our Husky Hero program. These students show kindness, respect, responsibility, and leadership in their actions every day. We are proud to highlight their efforts and celebrate the positive impact they have on our school.

Another way we are encouraging kindness is through our Kindness Wall in the cafeteria. This special wall is filling up with pictures of students who have shown acts of kindness to others. Whether it's helping a friend, including someone new, or offering words of encouragement, these moments make a difference. It has been wonderful to see students recognizing and appreciating each other's kindness, and we hope it continues to grow!



elementary news

Parent Feedback Survey

Our students enjoyed a full day of apple-themed STEM fun! They explored apple parts, tasted red, yellow, and green apples with various dips, and read 10 Apples on Top! before building their own “apple trees” and stacking apples. Through measuring, weighing, and discovering that apples float, they learned new concepts in a hands-on way. The day wrapped up with an apple seed experiment and making apple-scented playdough—an educational adventure filled with fall flavors!

Here is the link to get to the survey:
[Parent Survey](#)



Upcoming Concerts – Mark Your Calendars!

We are excited to invite families to our upcoming school concerts! Our students have been practicing and working hard, and we can’t wait for them to show off their musical talents. Please mark your calendars for the following concert dates:

- 🎵 **March 11th-Second Grade 7pm**
- 🎵 **March 20th-First Grade 7pm**
- 🎵 **March 25th-Kindergarten 7pm**

Looking Ahead

As we head into the last part of the school year, we want to thank you for being such an important part of our school community. Your support, encouragement, and involvement make a huge difference in your child’s education. Let’s work together to make these last few months meaningful, productive, and fun.

If you have any questions, need more information, or want to get involved, please reach out to us. We appreciate you and look forward to finishing the school year on a strong and positive note!



elementary news





elementary news

Support Our Community Food Pantry at Northwestern Elementary

Northwestern Local Schools is proud to host a community food pantry at our elementary school, open year-round to support local families in need. To keep our pantry well-stocked, we welcome donations of food and essential household items throughout the year. Donations of NEW items can be dropped off at the elementary school, with arrangements made through Becky Sugg or Alison Fiala at 419-846-3519.

Suggested donation items include:

- ***Canned fruits and vegetables***
- ***Cereal***
- ***Pasta & pasta sauce***
- ***Granola bars***
- ***Canned chicken, tuna, or SPAM***
- ***Soup***
- ***Peanut butter & jelly***
- ***Rice***
- ***Personal care items***
- ***Basic cleaning supplies***



Please check expiration dates before donating, and call upon arrival if assistance is needed. Drop-offs are accepted Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, and Saturdays by appointment. Thank you for helping us support our community!





middle school news



**Corey Richardson,
Middle School Principal**



Hello from NMS!

As we wrap up the winter sports season, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible efforts and achievements of our student-athletes. Our basketball teams had an outstanding season, with our 7th-grade boys expected to make it to the finals and our 7th-grade girls finishing as WCAL conference runners-up—an impressive accomplishment! Our wrestling team also had a fantastic year, securing 3rd place in the WCAL and celebrating three individual champions. Congratulations to all of our athletes for their hard work and dedication!

Beyond athletics, we have also been celebrating academic success. Our recent pep rallies highlighted students on the Honor Roll, Merit Roll, those with perfect attendance, and those who improved their grades from the first nine weeks. I am proud to share that 21% of our middle school students earned a place on the Honor Roll (all A's), 34% achieved Merit Roll status (all A's and B's), and an incredible 78% of our students improved in at least one class. These numbers reflect the dedication and commitment of our students, staff, and families in making education a priority.

Looking ahead, we are beginning the process of scheduling for next year. In the coming weeks, students will be discussing their course options, so be on the lookout for conversations at home about class selections. Your support in guiding them through this process is invaluable as we plan for another great year.

Thank you for your continued partnership in making our school a place where students thrive both in and out of the classroom.



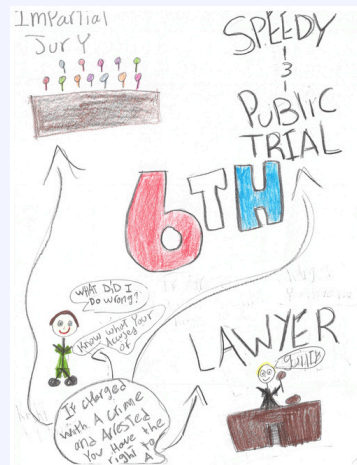
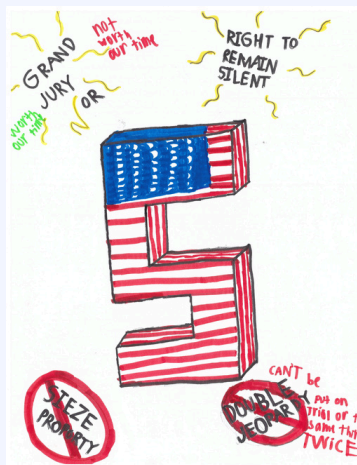
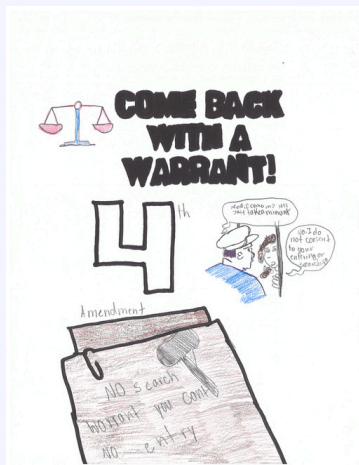
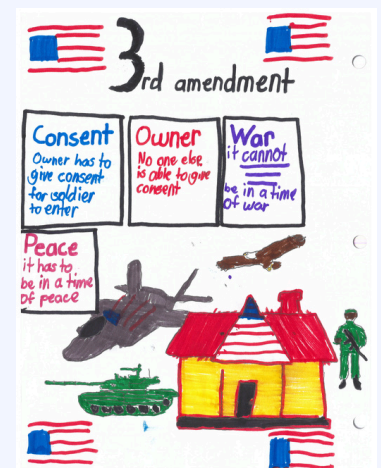
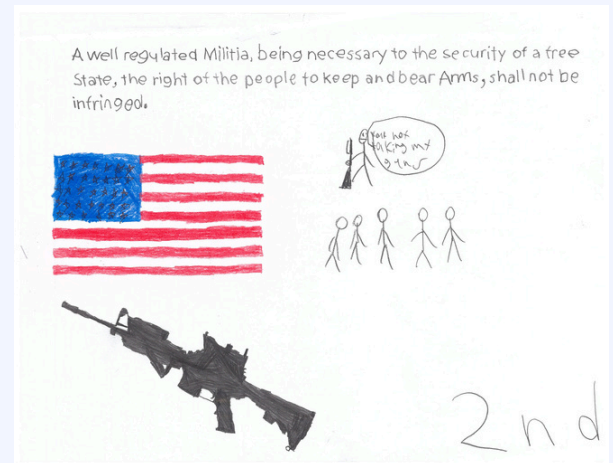
middle school news

8th Grade American History Students Shine in Amendment Poster Challenge

Students in Mr. Woodring's 8th Grade American History class recently took on an exciting challenge—creating a poster to explain one of the amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This project encouraged students to dive deep into their assigned amendments, showcasing their understanding through creativity and design. After careful consideration, staff and students selected six outstanding posters that best represented their respective amendments. Congratulations to the following students for their exceptional work:

- 📄 2nd Amendment – Jason McClure
- 📄 3rd Amendment – Camden Napier
- 📄 4th Amendment – Kaylea Lahmon
- 📄 5th Amendment – Hayden Rapp
- 📄 6th Amendment – Ashlynn Haven
- 📄 8th Amendment – Jocelyn Knapp

Great job to all students who participated in this project! Your efforts in bringing the Constitution to life through visual storytelling are truly commendable. Keep up the great work! 🇺🇸





middle school news

Exciting Times at Northwestern Middle School: Basketball, STEM Challenges, and Dancing!



🏀 Staff vs. Student Basketball Game 🏀

The much-anticipated staff vs. student basketball game was a thrilling matchup, with students giving it their all against their teachers. However, experience won out this time, as the staff came away with the victory! It was a great game filled with teamwork, sportsmanship, and plenty of laughs. A huge thank you to everyone who participated and cheered on both sides!



🥚 STEM Egg Drop Experiment 🥚

Our STEM students put their engineering skills to the test with the classic egg drop experiment! Using a variety of creative designs, students worked in teams to build contraptions meant to protect their eggs from a high fall. Some eggs survived the drop, while others... well, let's just say they didn't quite make it! Regardless of the outcome, it was an awesome opportunity for students to think critically, test their designs, and learn from the results.



🎵 Middle School Dance Fun 🎵

Students had the chance to let loose and have some fun at the middle school dance! With great music, plenty of dancing, and lots of laughter, it was the perfect way to celebrate a fantastic week at Northwestern Middle School.

From competition on the court to hands-on science and a night of fun with friends, this was a great reminder of what makes our school such a special place. Way to go, Huskies!



high school news



**Tyler Keener,
High School Principal**

Principal's Update

As we wrap up the winter season, I want to take a moment to congratulate our students for their hard work and dedication. From the classroom to the wrestling mats, our students have truly embodied the spirit of a Husky in all their endeavors. A special thank you to our coaches, advisors, families, and fans for your unwavering support throughout the winter — your commitment makes a difference!

Looking ahead, we're excited to kick off the spring season. We encourage everyone to get involved and support our students, whether in the classroom, on the stage, or on the field of competition. Your involvement strengthens our community and inspires our students to achieve their best.

I also want to give a huge shoutout to our Robotics teams for qualifying for the State Championship! Their dedication to innovation, problem-solving, and teamwork has been outstanding. We're incredibly proud and can't wait to see them represent Northwestern at the next level. Congratulations to all involved!

Let's keep up the momentum as we head into a new season of success. Go Northwestern!





high school news

Mike Burkholder Memorial & Northwestern Athletic Wall of Fame

The Northwestern Athletic Wall of Fame was established to honor individuals and teams who have made outstanding contributions to Northwestern's athletic programs. This recognition extends to those from the schools that merged to form Northwestern—West Salem, Congress, and Chester—preserving the rich history of our community's athletic excellence.

The creation of the Mike Burkholder Memorial & Northwestern Athletic Wall of Fame was inspired by former long-time Northwestern High School Principal and Coach Mike Burkholder. Following his passing, we sought a meaningful way to honor his legacy. True to his selfless nature, Mike had one request—that any tribute to him also celebrate the achievements of Northwestern athletes.

Mike's passion for students, athletes, staff, and the entire Northwestern community was unwavering. His leadership and dedication left an indelible mark on our school, and it is only fitting that his memory is enshrined at the entrance of our Husky Stadium Football and Track Sports Complex.

This tribute was made possible through the generosity of our Husky employees, community members, local businesses, the Wayne County Community Foundation, and the Burkholder family, whose collective contributions exceeded \$26,000. Thanks to their support, we continue to uphold a proud tradition of athletic excellence while honoring the legacy of an exceptional leader, mentor, and friend.



Each year, the committee reviews applications and selects outstanding Northwestern athletes and teams for recognition. Recipients are announced in August and honored during the fall football season. While applications are accepted year-round, nominations must be submitted by April 15 to be considered for induction that same year.



high school news



Greenhand and Chapter Degree Ceremony

On February 18th, Northwestern FFA hosted its annual Greenhand and Chapter Degree Ceremony, recognizing first- and second-year members for their dedication to the program. The Greenhand Degree is awarded to first-year FFA members who demonstrate knowledge of FFA history and purpose, complete a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project, and recite the FFA Creed. Each recipient received a certificate and bronze pin. Congratulations to the following Greenhand members: Laurie Bauman, Tessa Buzzard, Karsten Fisher, Adalynn Gray, Jesse Hanshaw, Case Keener, Colton Morris, Madeline Morris, Jaysen Royse, Marissa Smith, Shaydan Starlin, Jacelyn Cherry, Matthew Coman, Landon Ellerbrock, Zander Goon, Cara Graham, Bailey Howman, Jocelyn Knapp, Grant Koch, Olivia Madden, Mason Mobley, Hank Morris, Camden Napier, Austin Pierson, Kaidis Porter, Landen Rouse, Ray Sloan, Anabell Smith, Skylar Stark, Sadie Way, and Kashmiere Woods. Special recognition to Jaysen Royse for reciting the FFA Creed during the ceremony.

The Chapter FFA Degree is awarded to second-year members who meet additional FFA standards, including delivering a six-minute speech, leading a discussion, and earning at least \$150 or completing 50 SAE hours. Recipients received a silver pin and certificate. Congratulations to Lillian Boreman, Keaton Harris, Haley McLaughlin, Arian Means, Syrus Nyomo, Madilyn Smith, Kenzie Cutter, Jaycee Reed, and Clara Saal. Ohio FFA State Vice President at Large, Gracie Sprague, was the guest speaker, sharing four keys to success: work ethic, progress over perfection, embracing challenges, and loving the journey.

Following the ceremony, attendees enjoyed sweet treats and punch. Congratulations to all our hardworking FFA members on their achievements!





high school news



Northwestern-Wayne FFA Celebrates National FFA Week

Each February, National FFA Week brings leadership, service, and fun to Northwestern-Wayne FFA. This year's celebration, held February 15-22, engaged both middle and high school students in meaningful activities.

Tuesday, members participated in leadership and communication exercises with Ohio FFA Vice President at Large, Gracie Sprague. One challenge required teams to guide a blindfolded member in making a paper airplane—without saying “make a paper airplane.” This activity highlighted the importance of communication and teamwork.

Wednesday, FFA members spent a Day of Service cutting, splitting, and delivering six loads of firewood to community members in need. A big thank you to Pastors Paul, Chad, and Kyle for their support!

Thursday, students joined an FFA-themed scavenger hunt, ending at a thank-you letter station to show appreciation for mentors and supporters. The officer team also provided a teacher appreciation breakfast to thank staff for their continued support.

Friday, the Ag classroom hosted games, and the annual FFA Assembly brought together students and teachers for fun competitions, including a pedal tractor race, milk chugging contest, sack race, straw bale toss, and tug-of-war. The highlight was the Kiss a Farm Animal fundraiser, where Mr. Black kissed a pig, Mr. Crone kissed a lamb, and Mr. Keener kissed a pygmy goat! The event raised \$285 for the New Pittsburg Fire Department.

Thank you to everyone who made this week special!





high school news



Pictures from our FFA





athletic news



Anita Jorney-Gifford
Athletic Director



Boys State Qualifiers:

- 106 – Reed Hamey (43-9)
- 144 – Colton Morris (40-11)
- 285 – Caden Holliday (44-7)



Girls State Qualifier:

- 170 – Kelsee Smith (31-9)



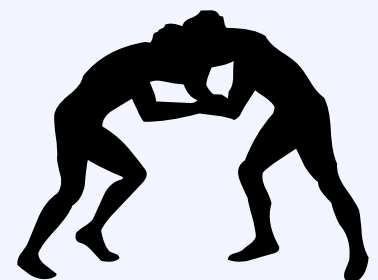


high school athletic news



Indoor Track & Field Qualifier:

Sophomore Brooke Nolletti qualified for the Division 3 Indoor State Championship in the 60m hurdles





middle school athletic news



Middle School Boys Basketball Champions!

Northwestern Middle School 7th grade boys basketball team won the WCAL Championship title! The Huskies finished the season with a perfect 19-0 record, including three decisive tournament wins. Coaches were Head Coach Eric Kline and Assistant Coach Kyle Borgan. Cheerleading Advisor was Andrea Spencer.



middle school athletic news



Middle School Girls Basketball Runner-Ups!

Northwestern Middle School 7th grade girls basketball took 2nd place in the WCAL Championship title game! The team was coached by Roy Woodring.