



Special Ed Times at JSD

December 2025 Newsletter

DECEMBER EVENTS

- 8:
 - SLP/SLT/Aud Professional Development
 - High School SPED Team Leaders Meeting
- 12:
 - Middle School SPED Team Leaders Meeting
 - HS/MS SCSC Singleton PLCs
- 22-31:
 - Winter Recess - No School

Message from Melanie Dawson, Program Administrator of Behavior

“One day on Mercury lasts 1,408 hours. The same as one December day in a classroom.”

Science says the days are now getting shorter... but every special education teacher knows the school days somehow feel longer (and longer.... and longer) this month.

Here are your Mercury-tested, classroom-approved survival tools to get to winter break:

Review Expectations: Take a few minutes to revisit routines and expectations. Consistency is your best friend in the December marathon. Celebrate Small Wins: Every breakthrough or completed assignment counts—don't forget to cheer yourself (and your students) on! Lean on Your Team: Don't weather the long day alone—collaborate, vent, and share resources.

Hang in there! Winter break is closer than it feels!

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- Jordan Behavior Assistance Team (JBAT) is available for consults or trainings. They are extremely knowledgeable and have a variety of resources available on their website: <https://behavior.jordandistrict.org/>
- The deadline to complete and submit WIAT-4 testing submission, was Thanksgiving. If you have not submitted your testing, please make arrangements with your teacher specialist to do so as soon as possible.
- The Utah Assistive Technology Team (UATT) for Jordan School District is a great resource that is intended to help increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of your student. When considering whether your student may need assistive technology, look over the [Assistive Technology Consideration and Resource Guide](#). For more information, visit [UATT](#).

Throughout the holidays, we can easily get stuck in “get everything done” mode. Unfortunately, there’s no such thing as “done” in life. Living with this mindset is living on a treadmill—running from one thing to another with a fleeting sense of progress, but new tasks immediately replace the “done” ones. When living this way, we become fixated on what’s next, rather than what’s here.

The feeling of completeness, wholeness, or fulfillment does not come from getting the right thing done. For every thing done there is something else that needs doing. Wholeness can only be experienced by stepping off the treadmill and focusing on the life in front of us and the people around us. Yep, even while we’re busy “getting things done.”

This change doesn’t mean that we are less productive, or even that we do less (though it might be worth reviewing the necessity of some of our busy-ness). It simply means that we are present for whatever it is that we are doing—that our awareness is aligned with our actions.

Beyond any gift, thing to buy, or task to complete—**our attention is our most precious resource**. It’s the **one** thing that we can uniquely give to a moment, another person, or experience.

We live in a time of endless distractions, which makes the gift of our attention the most challenging to give. Social media feeds, news cycles, and an overly demanding and complex modern world can gradually become a barrier to awareness of our actual, precious, limited life.

We may not be able to choose whether or not something needs to be done, but we can always choose how we spend our finite attention while doing it.

It’s on us to infuse our to-do’s with love, intention, and fun. Let’s commit this holiday season to go from presents, to presence!

Presence is the most meaningful gift we can give ourselves and others. Giving this (along with anything else we buy) will deepen our relationships, infuse our daily life with meaning, and open our everyday experiences (and “to-do’s”) to greater joy and fulfillment. If there was a black friday deal with those kinds of perks, you wouldn’t hesitate for a second!

Each moment of our daily life is another invitation to be here, now; to give the precious gift of our presence.

Happy holidays!

Wishing you wellness,

McKinley

Health and Wellness, Jordan School District wellness.jordandistrict.org

Teachers Toolbox

RULEBOOK REMINDERS

Making sure your Notice of Meeting is in Compliance

- Check the correct boxes at the top
- Check that correct Names are listed
- Date, Time, meeting place etc.
- Other Agency Representation

The following links go over the requirements for a Notice of Meeting.

[IEP Meeting Notice and Considerations](#) p.11

[JSD IEP Handbook Notice of Meeting](#) p.13

TEACHING TIDBITS

Here are a few great tools to help with ELA.

- A new teacher tool to make finding the main idea so much easier. The formula for finding the main idea is the topic + what it is mostly about = main idea. When we ask students to find the main idea, we’re really helping them focus on comprehension. We’re looking at details, repeated details, to help them infer the main idea.
[Main Idea Resource Sheet](#)
- Idea, Voice, Sentence Fluency, Organization, Word Choice, and Conventions are programs or curricula. They are the Six-Traits of good writing. These six words strip away the mystery of writing. They give every teacher and every student a shared language and a way to talk about what good writing looks like. Here is a guiding tool that breaks down each trait into teachable skills. These skills can be mini-lessons to teach to build strong writers.
[Six-Trait Mini-Skills Resource Sheet](#)

Jordan Behavior Assistance Team

1% Better
BEHAVIOR BYTE

Strategic Praise

Catch one positive behavior
early in the lesson and say it
aloud

“I appreciate how Alex
got his materials ready
quickly”

Others will follow suit.



1% changes for 100% results

ALL-STARS SPOTLIGHT

Cyndi Thomson
Special Education Teacher
Eastlake Elementary



Cyndi is an amazing resource teacher. She is creative in teaching her students. Her students use a writing task to help her decide what she is going to be for Halloween. She uses songs to teach counting and silly voices to teach regrouping. Cyndi is a great asset at Eastlake she works with all students no matter what they bring to the table. You are amazing Cyndi, thank you for all you do to make all students successful!

Tamra Dresser
Special Education Teacher
Sunset Ridge Middle School



Tamra Dresser has a deep passion for her students and for helping them recognize their potential. She consistently goes above and beyond, maintaining high expectations and supporting students as they rise to meet them. Her professionalism sets a strong example and serves as an excellent role model for others.

Emma Evans
Julie Cook
Speech-Language Pathologist
Riverside Elementary

Emma and Julie are the SLPs at Riverside Elementary and are truly advocates for the communication rights for children. They work to support all communication modalities for kids and collaborate with other team members, increasing the student's ability to access their academics as well as their peers and environment. Each of them seek new knowledge and understanding in their field and are not afraid to ask questions that lead to greater understanding. We appreciate them as part of our SLP team!

Killian Clegg
School Psychologist
Daybreak Elementary



Killian Clegg is a true inspiration, pouring his heart and soul into everything he does for his students at Daybreak Elementary. He is dedicated to the success of every student and makes sure that they all receive the support they need to thrive. He has an incredibly positive attitude and generous spirit. Killian is genuinely loved and appreciated by students, families, and colleagues. We are very fortunate to have him with us at Jordan School District.

Spencer Campbell
Principal
Kelsea Peak Middle School



Spencer is a true leader! He is caring and compassionate toward every person that he meets. He is passionate about education, which shows as you see him teaching or working with kids at JVL. Spencer goes the extra mile to ensure his special education teachers and the students receiving special education are fully supported and connected. He believes in giving each and every student a fresh start in order to do their best. He is always there and makes time for his students and all staff, regardless of the what else is going on. He actively seeks knowledge and understanding of special education procedures and law. We are lucky to have him!

Jaimie Tanner
Speech-Language Pathologist
Early Intervention

Jaimie Tanner is a dedicated Speech-Language Pathologist with 15 years of Early Intervention experience, whose warmth and collaborative spirit shine in every family interaction. As both a direct service provider and leader of our mentor team, Jaimie also plays a vital role on our intake team, ensuring families feel supported from the start. Her exceptional organizational skills are on full display as she coordinates our three annual festivals, fostering community connections and engagement. Jaimie's boundless Disney enthusiasm brings joy and positivity to our team, making her an inspiring leader and cherished colleague.