



Confident. Considerate. Creative.

DATE: January 20, 2026

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Kara Benston, Principal CES

SUBJECT: CES Principal's Report to the CSD School Board

This report covers the period from December 8 - January 19.

Academic Excellence:

Following winter break, staff focused on reestablishing classroom routines and instructional structures to support a smooth transition back to learning. Teachers reviewed expectations, reinforced academic habits, and eased students back into full instructional days with intentional pacing and support. These efforts have helped students re-engage in learning and rebuild momentum for the second half of the school year.

Staff Development:

Professional learning this month centered on reviewing and refining our instructional agreements in both English Language Arts and mathematics. Staff engaged in collaborative conversations to ensure consistency, alignment to best practices, and shared expectations across grade levels. This work supports instructional coherence schoolwide and strengthens our collective commitment to high-quality teaching and learning.

Infrastructure and Facilities:

Over winter break, facilities staff completed some paint touch-ups to maintain a clean, welcoming learning environment. We are also closely monitoring building temperatures during cold weather and proactively turning off outdoor water fountains when temperatures drop to prevent freezing and damage. These preventative measures help ensure the safety and functionality of our facilities.

Student Engagement and Well-being:

Just prior to winter break, student well-being and community connection were supported through a number of joyful, inclusive activities. Fun Fri-Yays dress-up days and classroom holiday celebrations provided opportunities for students to build relationships, express creativity, and strengthen their sense of belonging at school. These experiences helped create positive momentum leading into the break. In addition, our winter music program, facilitated by our excellent music teacher, Heather Wheeler, was a highlight for students, staff, and families. The performance showcased student learning, confidence, and collaboration, while also fostering school pride and community connection.

As students returned from winter break, staff continued to prioritize engagement and well-being by reteaching schoolwide and classroom expectations. Time was intentionally spent reinforcing routines, supporting regulation, and helping students transition back into structured learning environments. These practices have contributed to a calm, predictable start to the new year and support students' social-emotional needs alongside academic growth.

Challenges and Mitigation:

The post-break transition period can present challenges as students readjust to routines and expectations. Through consistent reteaching, clear communication, and collaborative support, staff are addressing these challenges proactively and ensuring students feel supported and successful. This month also included a leadership transition as we prepared for the shift to an interim principal. Transitions can present challenges related to continuity and communication; however, these were mitigated through intentional collaboration over the past week. Close partnership with district leadership and the incoming interim principal has supported shared understanding, continuity of priorities, and a smooth handoff of responsibilities. This collaborative approach has helped ensure stability for staff and students during the transition.

Extracurricular:

Winter extracurricular and enrichment planning continues as we look ahead to spring opportunities for student engagement beyond the classroom. Staff remain focused on creating inclusive opportunities that support student interests and connection.

Conclusion:

January has been a month of thoughtful transition, reflection, and recommitment to strong instructional and behavioral practices. Through intentional routines, collaborative professional learning, and continued attention to facilities and student well-being, Clatskanie Elementary School remains aligned with our mission of fostering confident, considerate, and creative learners.