



CHANGE IS COMING



The end of the Kirksey era

Katie Besancon
managing editor

After 35 years with the Omaha Public Schools district, Principal Dionne Kirksey announced in January that at the end of the 2025-2026 school year she would retire.

Kirksey started her time at King Science & Technology Magnet Middle School as a seventh-grade social studies teacher before moving to South High School, and later the Teacher Administration Center (TAC) building to work as a student personal assistant and a student community specialist before moving to downtown high. She started her time at Central in Aug 2000 as an assistant Principal and activities director and transitioned to principal in 2021 following Dr. Edward Bennett's departure.

For many students and families, the news of her retirement came as a surprise. However, for Kirksey, the decision has been set in stone since the summer, when events in her personal life solidified it would be her last year.

"The past two years have been a challenge in my personal life," Kirksey said.

In an interview, Kirksey said that even

if that final detail didn't take place this past summer, she would have only stayed in OPS for an additional year or two before retirement.

Come summer, she looks forward to spending more time with her mother and family and not having to have her brain in constant crisis solving mode, "maybe have my brain relax just a bit," she said.

In the past several months, Central has learned of changes taking effect coming next school year including the removal of department heads and the possibility of a shorter school day. Kirksey said these changes did not play a factor in her decision to step down after this academic year, but she recognizes the uncertainty surrounding those changes.

"I think it'll be okay, I think anytime there is a change sometimes we anticipate that it's not going to work, but I don't think that'll be a problem," Kirksey said.

"In education we are always changing anyway. We also have to prepare that there will be a change or anticipate what you think the change should be. I have to go with what I think is best or where I see us going in the long run when it comes to student outcomes and gains," Kirksey said.

During her time as principal, the most enjoyable moments have come from "watching students do what they do." Whether that was a school dance, a sporting event or graduation, Kirksey has had the opportunity to watch students in their element, doing what they love.

Kirksey said those moments will be something she will miss most about being a high school principal.

"Being able to sit back and see the growth from freshman to senior year," Kirksey said.

Come May, Kirksey will have been at Central for 26 years.

"I have seen a lot, especially when it comes to where education was in 1990 to where education looks like in 2026," Kirksey said.

Central is a school known for its tradition of excellence, and Kirksey has been able to see that tradition continue to excel and adapt through large hurdles over the last 26 years.

"I have been on this whole nine-month calendar for 35 years, so it will be interesting to see how my mind is able to relax and how I will be able to do different things that may take longer periods of time," Kirksey said.



Principal Dionne Kirksey.
ISAAC PERCIVAL-AIZENBERG | The Register

Central in talks to rework bell schedule

Isabella Smith
staff writer

Over the past couple of weeks, there has been speculation from both students and staff that Central might change its current bell schedule next year to increase student performance and improve the learning environment.

There have been conversations within the district regarding the block schedule being switched to a period or hybrid one, which would look more like a mixture of block and period, instead. Separately, both Omaha Public Schools and the Omaha Education Association are discussing how the length of the school day would be shortened by 20 minutes.

As of right now, none of these potential changes have been confirmed, but we know from Bridget Blevins, an external relations administrator for OPS, they are currently being negotiated and proposed.

Central principal Dionne Kirksey is advocating for these changes as she believes it could benefit the students at Central the most.

"[We could see] kids maybe wanting to come to school, kids maybe wanting to go to class, kids maybe engaging in the learning atmosphere more," Kirksey said.

The potential benefits mentioned above are goals Central has been working to reach for multiple years now, which is a leading

motivator for her advocacy.

"I have to look at the changes in education, the changes in how information is being [given] to [students], and what do we need to do to make sure young people are getting what they're supposed to and being proficient in more things than not," Kirksey said.

Another staff member at Central who supports and agrees with this is Jimmie Foster, the social studies department head and a union leader at Central who is involved in negotiations with OPS. After teaching in the district for years, he has seen multiple forms of the bell schedule and does not believe blocks are ideal. "We went to block, and everybody said that would be perfect, but our scores don't really show that," Foster said.

Foster added, "I think the shortened day for students is pretty big, I would be surprised if we didn't go to that."

Jordan Boyer is an Advanced Placement government teacher at Central who wants to go back to full period scheduling. "Ninety minutes is a long time to sit in a class, and even as adults it's tough for us to go to meetings and sit for an hour or more and retain and be engaged. But yet we expect students to do it every day," Boyer said.

Perspectives on scheduling revolve around wanting what's best for Central and the students, which includes potentially seeing higher scores and attendance rates. A new



A bell schedule poster hangs on a wall in classroom 011 as a student completes work.

NEVEAH WILSON | The Register

bell schedule could also accommodate students' shortening attention spans by requiring less time for them to be fully engaged and to have each subject on a day-to-day basis.

"I feel like if it's good for everybody and if it's what will help the most students and the most burnout and teachers, then we should do it," Boyer said.

News

Venezuelan students react to Maduro's capture p. 3 / pagina 3

Two students, Yilver Vezga and Jesús Landaeta, share their thoughts on U.S. capture of Maduro and where Venezuela goes from here.

Opinion

Keeping others safe outweighs missing school work when sick p. 6 / pagina 6

In the absence of a pandemic, too many sick students are comfortable with coming to school, even if that means getting others ill.

Arts & Culture

112th Roadshow highlights talents of Central students p. 8 / pagina 8

The annual production returned, including vocal and instrumental performances, acting, comedy and other acts.

Sports

Central alum finds success in sports media p. 12 / pagina 12

Connor Happer, who graduated from Central in 2010, now serves as an in-arena host, an emcee, and a radio personality, among many roles.

Students walk out to protest immigration enforcement

Lashell Harlan
contributing writer

Students at Central High School protested against Immigration and Customs Enforcement Jan. 20.

Many students stood along Dodge Street defending the rights of immigrants. They be-

lieved immigrants do not need to be deported because many people have lived here for more than 20 years, some have family and friends, and many have jobs here. They say there are reasons for why immigrants flee their countries and hope for a better life here.

Students at Central organized the protest to speak up about what's going on and why it

is wrong. That day there were two main protesters, junior Alaina Manzer and freshman Kortez Glover.

Manzer believed, "it was a good thing that we were loud and proud during the protest."

"By protesting I want to show how much I care about other cultures and other skins colors, and races should all be treated the same,"

Glover said.

In Central there are many Latino and immigrant students. Latino students make up 35.1% of students, according to OPS, and there were 667 people who spoke Spanish at home in 2024-25, and 39 languages were spoken by students.



Central students protest ICE during a walkout Jan. 20.

LASHELL HARLAN | The Register

Somali students react to events in Minneapolis, say actions are unfair

Charli Tobin
sports editor

Kylee Fulkerson
staff writer

The Trump administration and its anti-immigration campaign in Minneapolis have led to the death of two protesters, Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Federal agents are targeting Minneapolis heavily due to the city's large Somali population and because of a scandal, where members of the Somali community allegedly ran fake daycares and other non-existent social services that defrauded the state.

Minnesota has the largest Somali population of any state in the country.

Somali people across the country are nervous, including the population of Somali students at Central. In the 2024-25 school year 99 students spoke Somali, according to OPS data.

The Register spoke with two Somali students, and with the announcement of their temporary protected status they

were granted anonymity.

"There's a smaller community here. It's not huge," one Somali student said. Omaha has been their home for almost 10 years now, saying "it's been a great experience."

The student said, "Me personally, I live in Omaha, Nebraska, so it's not affecting me directly, but I have relatives in Minnesota who are getting affected by that and getting deported and not having a second chance. And even if it's not people getting taken by ICE... they're getting scared to go to their normal day jobs, schools. Children are afraid to go to even daycares or normal things, you know, everyday life."

Another student said that his community thinks it isn't right.

"They are immigration agents they need to follow the protocols and not target only one community," the student said.

President Donald Trump removed the temporary protected status from Somalis, causing them to lose their right to work and will go into effect March 17.

"Trump is obviously targeting a minority group. There's a bunch of minority groups out there, but he's specifically targeting one, for what specific reason, I don't know," the first student said. "He's saying that there's fraud going on. You know, there's fraud going on everywhere in the world. There's fraud going on in the government. There's fraud going on in other countries. So, to pick on one kind of group is usually unfair and it should be thought about more."

The second student said of Omaha's Somalicommunity, "They're not feeling good about it because it just came in and doesn't make sense right now, taking that protective status from the Somalis like at this time of moment."

The first student said, "His policies have been kind of unfair, in my opinion, with him using immigration as this kind of tactic, using immigration to scare people, even though there's people with legal documents, he's still coming after everything and using it as an intimidation tactic."

It is the goal of the Central High Register to represent the student body in issues affecting their lives as young people and students. If you feel that we are not covering an issue that is important to you, we welcome contributing writers who bring fresh ideas to the issues.

If you would like to write a story for your student newspaper, please contact Broderick Hilgenkamp at broderick.hilgenkamp@ops.org or come to room 029 to discuss your idea.

Correction

Last issue on page 9, The Register incorrectly stated the last time Central won the state championship in basketball was 2012. Central won in 2013 during the 2012-13 season. We apologize to any readers who may have been confused, and we have remedied the error and promise to continue being accountable about any future mistakes.



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Venezuelan students on Maduro's capture

Eduardo Torreblanca-Hernandez
staff writer

In the early morning hours of the third day in the new year, former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was captured by US troops in Caracas. Shortly after his capture, he was extradited to New York City to face criminal charges for drug trafficking. The Trump Administration announced that they will control Venezuela indefinitely until proper presidential elections have taken place and a new president is sworn in.

The Register interviewed two students on their stance on the ongoing events in Venezuela around Maduro's capture and further U.S. involvement. Those students were Yilver Vezga, who is from the state of Táchira and has lived in Omaha since 2024; and Jesús Landaeta, from Venezuela's Federal District

and who has lived in Omaha for three years. Maduro was sworn in as interim president in 2013 after former President Hugo Chávez's death and he later won the special presidential election that same year. He was reelected in 2018 and in 2024, which were disputed and other countries including the U.S. that said the elections were illegitimate. During his three presidential terms, Maduro has faced accusations of corruption, human rights violations and more along with 8 million people leaving the country.

When asked about Maduro not being in power anymore, their responses were glad that Maduro is out. Vezga said Maduro has a lot of stuff to pay for, and he was accused of being involved in a drug cartel.

"He deserved it, in other words, because Maduro is a bad president and a bad person," Landaeta said.

OPS did not provide data on the number

of students from Venezuela in the district or at Central.

When asked about further US involvement in Venezuela, the responses were mixed. "This Donald Trump, he's leading like a leader of Venezuela, while paying the 500 barrels of oil," Vezga said, referring to Trump selling off up to 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil to the U.S. at an estimated price of \$500 million.

Landaeta said Maduro kept the country poor without food. The people tried to protest against him, tried to oust him in any way, and "someone had to intervene and it was Trump, the one who intervened."

When asked if any family or friends were affected by the attacks, both said no. Even though Landaeta said no, he has family in Caracas, "where the bombings occurred and they could hear what happened, and nobody was affected, luckily," he said.



Jesús Landaeta
REEGAN MEREDITH | The Register

Pillen signs first-of-its-kind SNAP waiver

Grace Sunseri
chief copy editor

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) users cannot purchase soft drinks or energy drinks with their food stamps in Nebraska. The SNAP Healthy Choice Waiver, signed by Gov. Jim Pillen and put into effect Jan. 1, is to "restrict the purchase of non-nutritious items like soda and candy," according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food

and Nutrition Service. The waiver is designed to ensure that taxpayer dollars go to nutritious options only.

This waiver is part of the larger initiative "Make America Healthy Again," a push by the Trump administration, which urges Americans to prioritize protein and healthy fats while limiting consumption of ultra processed foods, especially those with added sugar.

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said in a statement, "With these new waivers,

we are empowering states to lead, protecting our children from the dangers of highly processed foods," she said, "moving one step closer to the President's promise to make America healthy again."

While Nebraska was the first state to accept one of these waivers, many states have followed suit. The items barred from SNAP eligibility vary from state to state. West Virginia and Utah have similar rules to Nebraska, while Florida's waiver is stricter with soda,

energy drinks, candy and prepared desserts disallowed under the new regulation.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has made some recommendations for healthy alternatives for these beverages. Some of these alternatives are photographed (above, below, to the right??)

Alternatives not photographed are coffee, green or black tea, milk, coconut water, smoothies, and fruit-infused still water.



Sparkling water is a good alternative for sodas, keeping the same carbonation but without added sugars. There are plain and flavored options, the flavorings being fruits and herbs.



Fruit juice is a beneficial source of vitamins, minerals and numerous other nutrients. These juices that have no added sugars can support heart health and reduce fatigue.

recommended alternatives



Vegetable juices can have similar benefits to fruit juice but with an umami taste instead of fruity sweetness.



Kombucha is fermented black tea with a vinegary, tart flavor. It is rich in probiotics and antioxidants that aid the gut health and microbiome.

New signage aims to help all navigate Central

Steven Dickerson
editor in chief

If you’ve walked the halls of Central recently, you may have noticed new purple and white signs with large arrows on the walls. The signage overhaul, started by Assistant Principal Jodi Dierks, is intended to help individuals navigate the building, while bringing safety and aesthetic upgrades.

In the past few years, particularly after the pandemic and “devious licks” trend, Dierks noticed that signage around the building was inconsistent, broken, or missing entirely. Last summer, she took the challenge head on, hoping to make the building more passable and standardize the placards.

“I just think of all the times I’ve had to help people around the building and thinking, there should be a sign there,” Dierks said.

Dierks inventoried the whole school, locating old or damaged signs, discovering which areas were hard to navigate, and where signs would be best placed.

“It was a lot of me walking around the building with a clipboard and taking pictures, saying, ‘Okay, I want this here and writing it down exactly how I want it,’” Dierks said.

“There was no signage for the new addition at all,” Dierks said.

All sides of the fourth floor also received signs.

“Many students forget that fourth floor doesn’t go around and blindly walk up the stairs, only to groan when they remember and have to go back down and around to the correct side,” said Jennifer Emanuel, a math teacher who teaches on the fourth floor.

Additionally, the up and down signs on all staircases, which were previously Omaha Public Schools-branded and put up during the pandemic, are now dual OPS and Central-branded while being fixed into the walls.

After identifying areas where signage was needed, Dierks created a rough graphic of what she wanted the signs to look like and sent them to P&P, OPS’ printing vendor, who fulfilled the order. OPS said Central paid \$379.77 for 16 signs.

The signs are expected to be most helpful for those new to the building, such as freshmen and visitors.

“I’m excited about the new signage, and really hope it helps freshmen find their way,” Emanuel said.

While the signs would be most helpful

for those new to the building, it also became apparent that signs would be helpful for others, such as custodians and substitute teachers, a point Dierks has emphasized during the signage update.

“We want substitutes to return, but if they have a bad experience, can’t find where

they’re going, and feel lost, then they may not return,” Dierks said.

Updates to signage will continue as the building evolves. Administration believes areas in need of signage will continue to be found over the upcoming years.



Maintenance drills into basement two side wall. Izabella Kammerer |The Register



New staircase signs leading to the 4th floor



ISAAC PERCIVAL-AIZENBERG |The Register

Snow days return to Omaha Public Schools

Connie Moennig
staff writer

Omaha Public Schools has made the shift back to standard snow days after five years of having remote learning days.

When online schoolwork became commonplace, OPS, along with many other school districts, made the switch from cancelling classes to going remote in cases of inclement weather. At first it was fully fledged online classes held on Microsoft Teams, then later on they moved to asynchronous lessons. In December of 2025, OPS announced it would no longer have remote learning days due to inclement weather.

Many students and teachers are glad to see the system go, believing it to be obsolete and a waste of time. Erica Meyer, a world language teacher, shared this sentiment, finding remote learning days and the guidelines attached to be incredibly frustrating.

Meyer described the rules as absurd. While she wasn’t fully against the idea of students being held accountable for their work on the days when they couldn’t come in, it was the way it was executed that caused her to dislike the system.

“The rules were, you couldn’t teach anything new, you couldn’t assign anything that was actually graded— it was ridiculous,” Meyer said.

Fellow teacher, and student support specialist at Central, Jamie Miller, said remote learning days were implemented mostly due to the district wanting to utilize the resources that were now in the hands of students and educators, after the pandemic rise of online

schooling.

“As we returned to in-person learning, we still had access to that,” Miller said. She also expressed a similar opinion to Meyer, believing that the idea was good in theory, but that there were some major holes in practice

that couldn’t be overlooked.

Disappointment with remote learning was felt beyond teachers as well. Many students, especially those who struggled when school was fully online, were glad to see remote learning days gone.

Junior Grace Messina said that they were pointless and weren’t as beneficial as the district thought they’d be.

“Nothing was getting done in the first place, so I’m just glad to see that they’re officially gone,” Messina said.



Central High school facing Dodge Street with a light layer of snow on the ground. Julius Wakole |The Register

ONE DAY CELEBRATING CENTRAL

ONE DAY FOR
CENTRAL
March 4, 2026



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\$30,000 CHALLENGE FUND

Mrs. Janet E. Milne will be matching all donations received for the Central High School Foundation during Give-Education Day 2026, dollar for dollar, up to \$30,000! **This gift was made in loving memory of her husband John Kuhns, CHS 1965.** Thanks to this challenge fund, your donation will double and make twice the impact!

WHAT IS ONE DAY FOR CENTRAL?

One Day For Central is a **24-hour, online day of giving** to support Central High School. Donors from around the world join to support Omaha's oldest high school. Money raised supports the Central High School Foundation and ensures that Central High School will continue its Tradition of Excellence for another 165 years!

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SELF AWARENESS IS KEY

Lack of respect shows when attending school sick

Katie Besancon
managing editor

Ever since COVID-19 disrupted schools, it feels like there has been a growing lack of respect for staying home when sick. Students and staff spent parts of multiple school years wearing masks to protect themselves and others. But, since mask mandates were lifted nearly four years ago, many people seem less concerned about avoiding school when they aren't feeling well.

It feels like students are afraid of missing class and falling behind, even if that means putting classmates and teachers at risk. I became especially aware of this issue during winter finals week. Throughout the halls, I noticed students sneezing and sniffing, which did not immediately alarm me. That changed when I walked into one of my classes and heard a student openly describing flu-like symptoms: chills, sweating, headaches, body aches and extreme fatigue. They even said they wanted to go home but weren't sure their parents would allow it.

Sure enough, by Friday of finals week, my own body gave out. I remember walking through Target when the symptoms hit all at once. My head throbbed, my body ached and I went from feeling hot to freezing within minutes. Earlier in the week, I had brushed off a scratchy throat because finals made it feel impossible to miss school. What I thought would be a short illness lasted more than a week and stretched into the first full week of winter break.

When school resumed, I learned another student in the same

class experienced nearly identical symptoms over the same time period. We both suspected the flu and realized there was only one likely place we could have caught it: school.

We were far from the only ones. It seemed like a large portion of the senior class had been sick before break. One of my teachers, who wasn't ill herself, even began wearing a mask because so many students were coming to school sick and she didn't want to be infected.

Students are required by state law to attend school, but we are also given excused sick days specifically to prevent situations like this. Teachers are usually understanding and flexible when students miss school due to illness. While coming in on a makeup day might not be enjoyable; it exists for a reason. Showing up sick doesn't just affect you, it affects everyone around you.

If you are slightly sick and feel you must attend school, wearing a mask is a simple step that helps protect others. While masks may feel outdated because we haven't regularly used them since 2022, they remain an effective way to limit the spread of illness.

This issue ultimately comes down to kindness and consideration. You never know who may have a compromised immune system or a vulnerable family member at home. What feels like a minor cold to one person could become dangerous for someone else.

Attendance policies also play a role. With the district's "Strive for 95" initiative and the



Outside of the nurses office room 133.

IZABELLA KAMMERER | The Register

pressure tied to events like homecoming and prom, many students hesitate to take sick days. These milestones are important parts of the high school experience, but prioritizing attendance at the expense of health only increases the risk of others getting sick.

If you aren't feeling well, please be considerate of others and stay home, not just for yourself, but for your peers. And if staying home isn't an option, wear a mask and take precautions. Protecting yourself and your health should always come before perfect attendance.

Mental illness should not replace accountability

Caprice McCoy
arts & opinion editor

In recent years, mental health has become more recognized than ever, which in many ways is a good thing. Conversations around diagnoses, therapy and emotional well-being are not as taboo.

However, that visibility has also created a growing issue: the use of mental illness as a shield from accountability. When someone explodes emotionally, crosses boundaries or hurts others and immediately blames it on a diagnosis, the conversation often stops there.

A reason becomes an excuse. While mental health conditions can explain behavior,

they do not erase the impact of that behavior on the people around them.

This dynamic places an unfair burden on others. Friends, partners, and peers are expected to walk on eggshells, constantly adjusting their own behavior to prevent someone else's emotional reactions. Instead of mutual understanding, relationships become unbalanced, with one person managing not only themselves but someone else's emotional regulation as well.

Supporting someone who struggles is different from accepting harm without repair. In healthy relationships, it should be acceptable to name when a diagnosis is being used as an excuse, not as an explanation, and to have

that conversation without fear of backlash. Accountability and compassion are not opposites — they are meant to coexist.

Additionally, the romanticization of mental health conditions online has created a distorted image of what these struggles actually look like.

There is also a noticeable pull toward categorizing oneself within mental health labels, especially online.

For some, these labels provide a technical explanation for experiences they have never been able to explain; for others, they provide a sense of belonging or individuality in an increasingly crowded digital space.

While this impulse is understandable, it

can blur the line between self-understanding and overidentification. When a diagnosis becomes a defining trait rather than a tool for growth, it risks oversimplifying complex experiences and shifting focus away from responsibility, healing and self-awareness.

Mental illness deserves empathy, resources and patience, not immunity from reflection or change. Learning to self-regulate is difficult, and no one gets it right every time.

But refusing to try, or using a diagnosis as a permanent fallback, ultimately harms everyone involved. Real progress happens when people are allowed both understand and accountability.

Unspoken hallway rules every Eagle should follow, please.

Kylee Fulkerson
staff writer

Have you ever walked in the halls and wanted to scream your head off because someone is walking like a snail in front of you or someone is going up the downstairs? If everyone just walked in a timely fashion, would we have so many students fighting with passion?

There might not be a specified rule book for the high school hallways. But there are definitely unspoken rules that everyone should follow.

One rule everyone should follow is to maintain an appropriate walking pace. Don't stand there like a statue and stop moving as slow as a snail.

There are no stop lights in the hallways, so stop walking like there are no people trying

to get to class. If you want to walk and talk to your friends, walk faster. Stop the traffic jams; hallways are not the interstate, so keep walking. Another unspoken hallway rule is stop the PDA.

A little kiss before class is one thing, but the full blown make out sessions are another. We do not live in a high school romance movie, and the walking holding hands not letting anybody through is insane.

My last and final unspoken rule is to stop eating and vaping in the bathroom during passing periods. The amount of time I see people eating a bag of chips or sharing the same vape -- have you ever thought of a thing called sexually transmitted infections, or have you ever thought that people might actually have to pee?

Those are my unspoken rules of the hallways that I think everyone should follow.



A hallway full of students walking to their classes.

JULIUS WAKOLE | The Register

The season of reviews



From left, Joe Alwyn, Noah Jupe, Chloe Zhao, Jessie Buckley, Paul Mescal and Jacobi Jupe pose at the 83rd Annual Golden Globes in Beverly Hills, California, Jan. 11. MARIO ANZUONI | Reuters

‘Hamnet’ will break your heart

Suri Alvarado Villegas
staff writer

I have never in my life cried during a movie the way I did while watching “Hamnet.” The film had a limited U.S. release on Nov. 26, 2025, before expanding nationwide on Dec. 12, following festival premieres at Telluride and the Toronto International Film Festival. As of late January 2026, “Hamnet” has grossed approximately \$42.1 million worldwide, showing strong reception and a solid box office performance for an awards-season drama.

Chloé Zhao’s acclaimed new film has been met with rave reviews since its festival run, with many calling it not only the best film of the year, but one of the greatest films ever made. “Hamnet” tells a story of love and loss centered on William Shakespeare, played by Paul Mescal, and his wife Agnes, brilliantly

played by Jessie Buckley. The film traces their love story to the devastating events that led Shakespeare to write “Hamlet.”

At its core, “Hamnet” is not only a story about the power of a mother’s love, but about the power of art itself. When the two collide, the result is that ending. It is one that, once you see it, I’m sure you’ll never forget. Every shot, every sequence, takes your breath away.

Zhao lingers on small details, the wind moving through tall grass, candlelight flickering across Agnes’ face, hands brushing in silence allowing emotion to surface without relying on dialogue and with the help of the soundtrack. Several of the film’s most powerful moments unfold in stillness, using natural light and long takes to communicate grief and intimacy in ways words never could.

I cannot imagine a better filmmaker for this story than Zhao, who won two Oscars

in 2021 for Best Director and Best Picture for “Nomadland.” Her direction is extraordinary. There is no one else quite like her when it comes to conveying mystique, intimacy and emotional depth.

“Hamnet” has won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Drama (2026), the Critics’ Choice Movie Award for Best Actress (Buckley), the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress – Motion Picture – Drama (Buckley), and has been named one of AFI’s Movies of the Year for 2026.

I’ve tried to read Shakespeare, but because English is not my first language, I often struggle to understand the words. I can study it, translate every line, and eventually learn the meaning, but it has never felt natural to me. Mescal addressed this exact struggle in conversation with Zhao, who is Chinese and experienced the same thing. “If Shakespeare

is performed correctly, you don’t have to understand what they are saying. You feel it in the body,” he said to her. I 100% agree. Mescal’s delivery of “To be, or not to be” was the first time I truly understood that monologue as an expression of grief.

Buckley, Mescal and Jacobi Jupe, who plays their son, deliver three of the best performances of the year. I hope Jupe earns a Best Supporting Actor nomination because his performance is astonishing. Buckley has several scenes where she shines with breathtaking intensity.

“Hamnet” is shaping up to be a major contender at the 2026 Academy Awards. Buckley has already secured herself as a frontrunner for Best Actress, with Zhao also in the conversation for Best Director and Best Picture as well.

‘Avatar: Fire and Ash’ is bigger, better and still brilliant

Caprice McCoy
arts & opinion editor

I’ll admit it upfront: I’m heavily biased when it comes to the “Avatar” franchise. I grew up watching the first movie on repeat since I was five years old, and Pandora has been living rent-free in my brain ever since.

From the moment James Cameron introduced this world, “Avatar” has prioritized immersive world building and long-term character growth over shock value or constant reinvention. That commitment becomes even clearer in the most recent installment, “Avatar 3: Fire and Ash.”

Across all three films, “Avatar” follows a pretty consistent storyline, and honestly, that’s kind of the point. Jake Sully’s journey from outsider to protector of Pandora continues as human forces push further into Na’vi land, forcing conflict, displacement and

loss. “Fire and Ash” doesn’t reset the story or pretend the past didn’t happen. Instead, it builds on it, introducing new Na’vi groups and internal divisions that complicate the idea that Pandora is united or morally simple. The stakes feel heavier not because they’re new, but because we’ve been here long enough to care.

That said, the most common criticism of the recent release is also the most predictable one: the plot feels familiar — almost the same. Humans invade, the Na’vi resist, things escalate. Bigger battles, higher emotional stakes, better visuals.

And yeah, that is true. But I find it interesting how often this complaint gets thrown at “Avatar” while other long-running franchises rarely get the same energy. “Marvel” and “Avengers” films reuse formulas constantly, and people still leave theaters impressed. “Transformers” has been telling variations of

the same story for years. Repetition isn’t automatically bad — it is a feature of franchises that know their audience.

What makes “Avatar” so easy to re-watch and return to is that it does not try to outsmart itself. The story is predictable in the best way. You do not need to memorize 20 movies or track a million side characters to understand what’s happening. Even if you jumped into the later films, you could follow the plot easily, while still missing small details that reward longtime fans. It is familiar, but never empty.

That familiarity is part of the comfort. Every time I rewatch the series, I notice something new — a background detail, a line of dialogue, a visual callback. Pandora feels lived-in, not rushed. The world expands naturally instead of constantly being reinvented just to feel new. That is something a lot of franchises struggle with, and the franchise handles it

surprisingly well.

“Avatar: Fire and Ash” leans hard into emotional continuity, especially when it comes to loss, anger, and long-term consequences. Characters are not magically healed by previous victories. The damage carries over. Relationships are strained. The conflict feels heavier because it’s been going on for so long, both in-universe and for the audience watching.

At the end of the day, “Avatar: Fire and Ash” does not succeed because it’s wildly different — it succeeds because it knows exactly what it is. The world is bigger, the visuals are better, and the emotional investment keeps building.

You may know the plot, but you don’t know how it will feel each time you return to Pandora. And for a franchise that’s always been about immersion, that’s more than enough.

Central holds 112th Roadshow

Violet Lightner
contributing writer

The Central Roadshow is a important tradition that held its 112th show this year.

It showcases students' talents and allows them to perform for parents, peers and alumni. It is a night where the creative students at Central get to shine.

"The different types of talent, and variety acts that we're able to showcase on our stage, which really shows the diversity that we have, you know, in our Central community, to be able to showcase so many talented students on our stage," said Scott Mead, the drama director.

One multitalented student who performed is senior Izzy Worden. Partaking in multiple acts, Worden is no stranger to the work and practice that goes into the roadshow. Worden performed her original song, "Looks Could Kill (Dear Isabella)," at the Roadshow. Her goal was to promote it and leave with no regrets her senior year.

"It's a lot of work especially because this is such a busy time of year and coming back from break and there's snow days and cold days, but I think when it all comes together it's so rewarding," she said.

Freshmen Jay Ewing participated in their first Roadshow, and read their original poetry alongside freshmen Ethan Kershner.

"I like to take opportunities to show my work and my art and I feel like again, this is one of my best works I think, and me and my friend have been talking about it for a really long time and this was the best opportunity to take it," said Ewing.

Since the Roadshow has so much variety, it demands a lot of time and attention to detail. The Roadshow highlights the talents of not just performers but the numerous other people behind the scenes that make the 21-act show possible. From lighting crew to sound crew and management crew they all work together to put something amazing together.



From left, senior Charlie Gaillard, junior Maggie Howard, sophomore Grace Messina, sophomore Audrey Fischer and freshman Ethan Kershner rehearse an improv skit.

NEVEAH WILSON | The Register



Freshmen Jay Ewing, left, and Ethan Kershner perform a poem.

VIOLET LIGHTNER | The Register



Central A Cappella performs during the Roadshow on Jan. 31.

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register



Central Color Guard rehearses for CHS Roadshow.

NEVEAH WILSON | The Register



Central Color Guard rehearses for the Roadshow.

NEVEAH WILSON | The Register



From left, freshman Ethan Kershner, sophomore Maggie Howard and sophomore Audrey Fischer perform improv during the 112th Roadshow on Jan 31.

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register



Junior Violet Little during her dance performance.

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register

112th Roadshow Gallery

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register



Senior Tiernery Coughlin holds a flag during CHS Color Guard's performance on Jan. 31.



From left, senior Izzy Worden and senior Henry Howard perform Worden's original song Jan. 31.



Junior Tommy Melone-Reynoso, left, senior Charlie Gailord, top, senior Will Wisneski, middle, and junior Eris Rodriguez perform a song at the 112th Roadshow on Jan. 31.



From left, junior Simon Lowe-Weyand and senior Henry Howard perform during the 112th Roadshow.



From right, senior Laya Dorsey and senior Jaiden Harvey sings "Late Nights" at 112th Roadshow on Jan. 31.



Junior Reegan Meredith shares a poem at the 112th Roadshow on Jan. 31.

Isabella Smith
staff writer

Spoiler warning!!

On New Year's Eve, the highly anticipated finale of "Stranger Things" was released on Netflix, but it didn't entirely meet the expectations of the show's massive fanbase.

As someone who grew up with the show and waited over three years for season five, I was disappointed to say the least. This season's release schedule set up three volumes over the span of about a month. After the first came out I was convinced it was going to be the best ending in TV show history. I learned very quickly that this would not be the case.

There are numerous factors that go into why, mainly the rushed writing and overall lack of complexity, but the strongest is how the Duffer Brothers handled the ending of their main female lead, Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown). Since they left it up to the audience's interpretation, one of two things could have happened: she sacrificed herself in the upside down, or she escaped and is living in isolation outside of the country.

Neither of these possibilities are particularly empowering, as the Duffers claimed the ending would be. Either they gave a message that the only way for a young girl to break the cycle of abuse is by killing herself, or that same girl would have to leave the life she had built to save everyone else.

In her final moments, the Duffers showed a montage of her relationship with Mike (Finn Wolfhard), essentially reducing her character to this one-dimensional role of a girlfriend.

They even compared her to the magic of childhood, saying she always had to go so the others could "move on" with their lives. To me, her ending reeks of misogyny and is extremely distasteful.

Aside from this, the writing choices in this season felt unusually rushed and confusing, despite having three years to complete it.

A blaring example of this is the ultimate demise of the show's main

villain, Vecna. It took all of 30 minutes and an axe to kill him, barely touching on his backstory or reasoning for doing anything he did. This completely contradicts the prequel stage play "Stranger Things: The First Shadow," especially since it explored Henry Creel's (Vecna) childhood after those initial months living in Hawkins, which was supposed to connect back to the plot of the original series.

Another case that stands out is Will's coming out scene. What could've been one of the best examples of queer representation instead turned into a joke, opening mass amounts of homophobic reviews and comments in media.

All this combined led to fans making their own theories that would help cope with the ending. One of these is "conformity gate," which is the theory that a new episode would come out because Vecna didn't actually die and was still controlling the narrative. Believers of this theory thought it would explain some of the plot holes and trashed character arcs seen in the supposedly fake finale.

The Duffers and some cast members confirmed this to be false, but the fact that fans convinced themselves the ending was fake because the writing was so bad

should say something.

In the new documentary "Stranger Things: One Last Adventure," the Duffers were seen having both ChatGPT and Reddit tabs open. This has led to fans now speculating that they were used to write the scripts for Season 5.

I was extremely let down by the ending of this show, especially knowing the potential

it still had even before Volume Two was released. Part of this could come from the insanely creative fan theories which proved to be better than the show itself, but I think it's mainly because the end didn't even come close to the incredible work we've seen from them in the past.



Advertisement for "Stranger Things" are shown on one of their buildings in the Hollywood neighborhood. MIKE BLAKE | REUTERS

Tipico Helado is bigger and better in the Old Market

Brianna Martinez
staff writer

Tipico Helado is a staple in South Omaha known for their variety of ice cream flavors. Many childhood favorite treats like Mazapan or Chocolate de la Abuelita are also sold. It is no mystery that the ice cream is delicious, and I am very familiar with the shop and the food trucks, so I was excited to see them open a downtown location.

Off the bat, the Farnam location is bigger than the South Omaha location, with about 15 tables, lots of vibrant blues and yellow,

lights everywhere and many places to take pictures. Since I am familiar with the ice cream, I decided to try one of the Tipico refreshers: a Mango passion fruit drink with choice of sorbet- I chose red dragon fruit. I also got the original mini pancake plate (mini pancakes, bananas, strawberries, vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup and whipped cream).

I have been seeing the mini pancakes on Instagram, and they are a nice sweat treat and palette cleanser for the fruit and are a fresh take from the hot pancakes. I like this treat for the colder months.

The refresher was served to me right

away, but I did have to wait about eight minutes to get the pancakes, which gave me time to look at the art they have on the walls and all the different quotes.

The refresher was very fruity with lots of flavors. It is comparable to a Starbucks refresher. I think what gave it more of a natural flavor was the sorbet I added to it that the server nicely pointed out was one of the best flavor pairs for that refresher.

Pricewise, everything was worth the cost. The mini pancakes were \$12. Both the items I got are shareable, so you get a good bang for your buck. The refresher was \$8.50 and

only comes in a large size. If I'm comparing Starbucks or Scooters, I would come back here to get my money's worth for a good-sized drink. Since this location is downtown, it's a fun place to stop and check out if you want to try a new place. They have treats for everyone, both sweet and savory like, esquites, tostilocos or just a simple popsicle, the varieties are endless.

This is definitely a spot I will be coming to after school because of other drinks I was interested in trying.

Disney originals are becoming way too rare

Harper Gniffke-Leak
contributing writer

Most kids grew up watching iconic Disney Originals like "Frozen," "Tangled" and "Moana," but now those loved movies are recreated with cheap live actions and sequels. Although a few sequels are decent, like "Frozen 2," most of them are a severe letdown, such as the live action "Snow White," "Moana 2" and the live action "Lilo and Stitch."

The last original Disney movie was "Wish" in 2023, a rarely watched animation, and the most recent well-liked Disney movie was "Encanto," released in 2021. All Disney can make are sequels, with the recent release of "Zootopia 2" and the expected "Frozen 3" in 2027.

The main issue with these sequels is the obvious choice of quantity over quality. Few movies prioritize the same heartfelt songs or feelings that the originals have, and in the past, they pick popular actors and actresses for live actions instead of picking the ones best suited for the roles.

However, the live action of "Tangled"

was recently cast, and the actors will likely fit the role well, with Teagan Croft as Rapunzel, Kathryn Hahn as Mother Gothel and Milo Manheim as Flynn Rider. Hopefully this is a signal of change for the better when it comes to live actions, but there is no way to tell.

Another issue with these movies is that they are not needed. Although "Frozen" left some room for exploration and character development that led to the sequel, some movies like "Moana" do not need a sequel.

It is also frustrating to see "live actions" of movies where the characters are not even human, such as the live action "The Lion King" and "Mufasa: The Lion King." Although some people enjoy these remakes, the original magic and feeling when watching "The Princess and the Frog" or "Aladdin" cannot be replaced.

Disney creates these movies as an attempt to make more money, as it is a risk to make an original movie and hope people will love it. It seems easier to continue or recreate the story of a loved character, because that will bring incentives to see it.

But the audience would benefit from something new and exciting, creating new

characters to add to people's favorites. Good original movies would be welcomed and watched more than these sequels and eventually achieve a bigger payoff. It is definitely worth the risk.

Simply put, original movies are better. Creative plots such as "Beauty and the Beast" and family movies like "Encanto" are much

more popular than the live actions "Mulan" or "The Little Mermaid." Some people are not even aware that these recreations exist! Original movies are much more popular if devoted to and carefully created. Disney can easily win back their fans with fun, family-oriented and refreshing original films.



Jason Bateman poses at the premiere of "Zootopia 2." DAVID SWANSON | REUTERS

CHS choirs hold tryouts for new students

Gaby Antunez
digital editor

The Central High School choir has been one of the most popular classes through the years.

There are currently more than 120 singers in the program, ranging from freshman to seniors. The CHS choir is currently looking for people to join their program for next year's ensemble to fill the gap that the current seniors will leave.

The current choir teachers are Sara Cowan and Kathryn Bohn. Cowan has been a choir teacher for 16 years, this being her 14th year at Central. She has seen many different singers and said that over time they have gotten better. No prerequisite classes are needed to join the beginning choir class. If a student has passion and ambition, there is only learning left to occur.

Cowan has been putting fliers over the school, as well as posting on social media to attract interest.

"You can find some of our recent performances in our reels, and I've been sharing quotes from singers about why they love being in choir on our stories," Cowan said. Find them on Instagram @centralhighchoir.

The current CHS choir members have also played a big role in finding new singers. They have been recommending students to Cowan about who might be interested in joining. Cowan will send them a letter about the choir and will help them schedule a time to meet if interested.

The CHS singers have multiple field trip opportunities and concerts.

"This spring, we're taking a trip to Chicago with our top choirs—65 students are going! We want more students to have these opportunities and join in on the fun," Cowan said.

Here are some words of advice and favorite memories the current CHS singers have shared:

"You don't need to be good at singing to join, a big thing about choir is getting better at singing," freshman Jack Malm said.

"When I have a bad day I can get here and my day gets better. Everyone is happy to be here because they want to be in this class,



Choir students sing as teacher Kathryn Bohn, right teaches.

the vibe is just wonderful from both teachers and students," freshman Sophia Pena-Moreno said.

"CHS choir is an amazing opportunity for people who enjoy singing. It is not like middle school choir at all! It is way more professional and we have a ton of more exciting events," freshman Damon Oo said.

"Everyone supports each other, and it's a place where I feel comfortable and included," sophomore Zaura Nikiema said.

"My favorite thing about choir is how collaborative it is and the amount of opportunities it gives you," sophomore Rachel Zurita

Amberg said.

"Everyone is so supportive and great at singing, it makes me glad to be apart of such a loving community and environment," Junior Laura Ewing said.

"It's a place where you can enjoy and have fun and learn new things and meet new people," junior Elisha Mazimba said.

"I love the feeling of being a part of such a talented and large group. The feeling you get when you sing with everyone is unmatched," Junior Grace Messina said.

"You really will see yourself improve a ton, regardless of how good of a singer you

NEVEAH WILSON

| The Register

think you are. I've gotten so much better from just a year and a half in the program," senior Charlie Gaillard said.

"Everyone singing together makes me happy and it definitely makes you feel good when you hear lots of voices working together to create something pretty!" Senior Evvan VanBeek said.

"I love the community that gets built throughout the year, and seeing the growth of every singer! We are all just like a family," senior Tyler Cook said.

If interested in joining the CHS choir, email Cowan at Sara.Cowan@ops.org.

What students did over break

Jazmin Mills
staff writer

Christmas break lasted two weeks, from Dec. 22 to Jan. 2. This gave students two weeks of free time to spend time with their family and friends, catch up on sleep or whatever else they wanted.

Senior Dayami Huitron traveled a lot during her two weeks of break. "I went to Las Vegas, and I lived my best life out there. I got to hang out with my cousins and spend time with them, which was nice because I don't get to see them often," Huitron said.

To keep busy while there, Huitron and her cousins would do a variety of activities like movie nights, late night food and store

runs, escape rooms and driving around the city at night. Huitron's most memorable moment from the trip is when her dad accidentally took the wrong exit and took the family through Wyoming instead of Colorado.

"The drive was really nice because of all

I went to Las Vegas, and I lived my best life out there.

Dayami Huitron

the scenic views, I enjoyed the mountains the most," Huitron said. Fortunately for the family, the route through Wyoming turned out to be faster than the one through Colorado.

For junior Keaton Carver, his break was

more relaxed. Carver spent the majority of his free time hanging out with his friends.

"I would describe my winter break as fun. It was a good break from school, and I enjoyed the little bit of snow we had," Carver said.

Carver's most memorable memory from break is when he and his friends went to a trampoline park. "I tried to do a trick, and I ended up tearing my pants," Carver said. He was teased for the rest of the night.

Carver also got to see previous Central graduates during his break, which he also enjoyed.

Towards the end of the two-week break, a part of him looked forward to coming back to school to see all of his friends. Another thing Carver looked forward to at school was sing-

ing in the choir.

Additionally, senior Jaiden Harvey also had a laidback break. "My winter break was very relaxing. I was able to see a lot of my family, which I'm thankful for because not everyone gets to experience that," Harvey said.

Harvey spent most of her time reading, watching TV and spending time with her family. Her favorite movie she watched was "Avatar: Fire and Ash."

Harvey's also went wedding dress shopping with her sister. "Each time she tried a dress on, me, my stepmom and her soon to be mother-in-law all started to cry. She looked absolutely stunning in it and I can't wait for her big day," Harvey said.

A\$AP Rocky's 'Don't Be Dumb' is peak creativity

Noah Sipe
staff writer

"Don't Be Dumb" was released Jan 16. The last time A\$AP Rocky released an album was in 2018. A\$AP Rocky is popular for how his projects sound. For how long it took for this album to release, as it was announced to be 2025 music, it built hype to see if this project was worth the wait.

"Don't Be Dumb" is an experimental hip-hop album that blends multiple genres including jazz, hip-hop, metal and R&B, something not seen often. The cover includes a highly expressive artwork created by filmmaker Tim Burton.

The first track, "ORDER OF PROTEC-

TION," gives you a unique look into how the album will sound. It is a pumped-up hip-hop song, but throughout the song is instrumental. You hear a drum, adding depth to how it sounds.

"STOLE YA FLOW" showcases a beat impossible to predict or recreate, something A\$AP Rocky perfects on this album. The high tempo, metal inspired instrumentals on this record mesh perfect with A\$AP Rocky's rapping. Listening to the album in order you will go through it and experience going from high tempo to an R&B inspired song, and it works.

From "STOLE YA FLOW" you go to "STAY HERE 4 LIFE," featuring Brent Faiyaz. Brent Faiyaz's music performance heavily relies on his vocals and flow, and it works perfectly.

"NO TRESPASSING" is the best work on this album when it comes to the instrumentals. It embodies how unexpected this album can sound.

There are no rules to music. "PUNK ROCKY" shows it. You can tell how much his voice is mixed and processed to match the beat, it works beautifully. The track sounds like a psychedelic, surreal and mind-altering experience when it comes to music.

The experimental aspect of music is all over this album. "WHISKEY (RELEASE ME)" has one of the best beat switches in a while. The Gritty East Coast rapper Westside Gunn as well added a lot to the track.

"ROBBERY" does not match the album at all, as it's the only track with a slow tempo

on the album. DoeChii, who was featured, has the worst verse on this entire album. She raps using a kissing sound, which is not unique; it's annoying and ruins the piano on the track, which is one of the most unique pieces of music on this project. Don't skip this track through. The instrumental is still worth the listen.

"Don't Be Dumb" consistently tries to sound unique. Jumping through sounds, you will hear things you have never heard before. It wasn't perfect, because you cannot perfect it, which is why nobody has tried what A\$AP Rocky has done with this project. It's worth giving a listen, especially if you like hip-hop or want to hear something new.

CONNOR HAPPER REFLECTS

Central alum finds success as sports media figure

Steven Dickerson
editor-in-chief

Many may recognize the name Connor Happer, particularly those who have attended a Creighton basketball game at CHI Health Center or listeners of 1620 The Zone. Happer has made a name for himself in an intense, ever-changing Nebraska sports media environment. But many are surprised to learn that he went to Central.

"I look back on my time at Central really fondly," Happer said. The sports media professional transferred from Millard North in 2008 and graduated from Central in 2010.

Happer is a man of many hats, with his main job being the co-host of "The Happer and Schaefer Show," a morning sports talk show on 1620 The Zone. He also works extensively with Creighton athletics, serving

as their in-arena host at home athletic events and as a radio personality.

Additionally, he is the public announcer for Nebraska women's basketball, emcee for the Omaha Stormchasers and has done sideline reporting and color commentary for the Men's College World Series.

Despite his current roles, as an eagle, Happer was not heavily involved in activities lending themselves to sports media. OC Broadcasting did not exist yet, and he was never able to join The Register because he was too busy with varsity football and baseball. However, he said Central played a key role in his professional growth.

"[At Central] I did some PA announcing because nobody else wanted to do it... little did I know I'd be doing something very similar now," Happer said.

Looking back, Happer now sees those

small moments at Central as foreshadowing his future career. The early exposure helped spark an interest in sports media that he would later realize while at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln following a short stint in junior college baseball.

Happer also reflects on the impact his baseball coaches had on his work ethic and preparation. Social studies teacher Scott Wilson, one of the junior varsity baseball coaches at the time, was one of his biggest mentors.

"He was really good at caring about the presentation of the game and how it looked," Happer said of Wilson's own public announcing. He said that sticks with him to this day as he navigates sports media.

"He could really crack me up in the dugout... it has been fun to see him make the climb through the sports media ranks here in town," Wilson said.

Central also holds deep personal meaning for Happer beyond athletics and media. During his time at Central, he met his wife, Jackie.

"This is such a great Central story. I was tapped for the senior collaborative dance with the pom squad, long story short she was my partner, and we've been together ever since," Happer said. "We will always have a special spot for Central in our hearts because of that."

Since graduating in 2010, Happer has watched Central continue to evolve. He has watched improvements to the building and the creation of the broadcasting program, admiring the innovation that has happened and reflecting on how graduating from Central has shaped his life.

"My time at Central was awesome, and I'm very glad I ended up there," Happer said.



Radio personality Connor Happer throws t-shirts into the crowd at a Creighton basketball game.

JOEL DEMAN | Creighton Athletics

Tuttle shows wrestling's future

Arianna Detisch
contributing writer

Sophomore Isaiah Tuttle leads the Central boys varsity wrestling team with a record of 26-5, and a total of 127.5 points for the 25-26 season.

Tuttle, who goes by "Ace," started wrestling at 8 years old. He plays football and wrestles, both of which he chose to stick with. In addition to school wrestling, Tuttle wrestles all year round at MWC Nebraska club wrestling.

Leading the team isn't just a new occurrence for Tuttle. As a freshman he beat a Central record of most continuous wins, and a record of 40-8, with 32 of those matches being falls.

Tuttle works hard outside practice as well, to grow even more as an athlete.

From sprints to weightlifting weekly,

he has a disciplined mindset to get stronger mentally and physically.

"I just enjoy it. I enjoy it as a sport. I enjoy doing it," Tuttle said about what he loves about wrestling.

The thought of being a three-time state champion leads Tuttle to work hard during practice.

Being a team leader comes with hard struggles as well.

Mentally and physically Tuttle has to continue to keep a strong mindset for wrestling. He says he tries not to overthink too much or over analyze his opponent when going into a match.

"Weight cutting, and being there for everyone, you know it kind of sucks letting people down sometimes," Tuttle said.

Expectations from coaches and wanting to be a three-time champion are all motivators for Tuttle and his hard work ethics.



Isaiah Tuttle gets a pin during a match.

ARIANNA DETISCH | The Register

Triple threat trio taking over Central girls wrestling

Charli Tobin
sports editor

The girls' wrestling season is over halfway done, and three wrestlers have stood out as stars.

Junior Griselda Lopez-Lopez, freshman Kiera Webb-Dunn and sophomore Mary Jones have excelled this season. All combined have brought in 321.5 team points this season. Lopez-Lopez and Webb-Dunn lead the team in wins with 16 each. Webb-Dunn and Jones both lead the team in falls with 17 each. Lopez-Lopez also qualified for state last year and made it to the quarterfinals.

"I would contribute my hard work and effort that I put into training to become a good wrestler," Lopez-Lopez said.

Webb-Dunn believes their key to victory

is dedication.

"Not wanting to lose, if I'm being honest. I just practice hard and just like the will to want to win," Webb-Dunn said.

All three are looking to finish their season with a bright mark, making it to the state tournament. In order to achieve that goal, the trio has been showing up to practice extra hard.

"You know, once again, showing up to practice, you know, working hard. Showing up to practice is like definitely the main goal is working hard," Jones said.

Likewise, Lopez-Lopez said, "listening to my coaches and then going over video footage from past matches and working on little things that win big matches," as another contribution to her success.



Freshman Kiera Webb-Dunn competes in match earlier this wrestling season. LIZBETH URIOSSETGUI-ESTRADA | The O-Book

Champions League round of 16 projections; begins March 10

Whitman Rutledge
staff writer

The UEFA league phase officially finished on Jan. 28, and Arsenal finished first with an unbeaten record. Arsenal, Bayern, Liverpool, Tottenham, Barcelona, Chelsea, Sporting Clube de Portugal and Manchester City have qualified for the round of 16. The knockout drawings were on Jan. 30.

The Knockout draws are the teams who made 24th to ninth place, and each team in these knock drawings will go against a random team in that group of 16 that didn't make the top eight.

Out of that group of 16 teams, those who win will join the group that already qualified.

Surprisingly, Real Madrid didn't make the top eight with a very insane loss to S.L. Benfica. It was a last-minute goal by the goalie to make it into the knockout stage.

The remaining teams that are not in the

top eight are going to go head-to-head in a two-legged knockout stage this month.

It's Real Madrid-Benfica, PSG-Monaco, Galatasaray-Juventus, Dortmund-Atalanta, Qarabag-Newcastle, Club Brugge-Athletico Madrid, Bodø/Glimt-Inter Milan and Olympiakos-Bayer Leverkusen. These are the predictions for who will go on to the round of 16.

Real Madrid over Benfica, Paris Saint Germain over Monaco, Galatasaray over Juventus, Dortmund over Atalanta, Newcastle over Qarabag, Athletico Madrid over Club Brugge, Inter over Bodø and Olympiakos over Bayer Leverkusen.

So final prediction, Arsenal, Bayern, Liverpool Tottenham, Barcelona, Chelsea, Sporting Clube de Portugal, Man City, Real Madrid, Paris Saint Germain, Galatasaray, Dortmund, Newcastle United, Athletico Madrid, Inter Milan and Olympiacos is the final prediction who will be in the round of 16 on the Mar. 10.



Soccer Football - UEFA Champions League - Knockout Phase Playoffs Draw - UEFA Headquarters, Nyon, Switzerland - Jan. 30. PIERRE ALBOUY | REUTERS

Photo gallery: boys basketball

Bradley Smith
photography editor



Left: Senior Lenox Haynes goes up to score against Elkhorn South on Jan. 20. Upper right: Junior Nels Petersen shoots a 3-pointer versus Lincoln Northstar on Feb. 3. Bottom right: Junior Nathan Stavneak attempts to shoot the basketball into the hoop versus Lincoln Northstar on Feb. 3.



Freshman Hadley Anderson, second from left, takes a shot against Lincoln North Star.



Sophomore Reality Mapp dribbles down the court.

HARPER GNIFFKE-LEAK | The Register

Young starters take leading roles on girls varsity basketball

Harper Gniffke-Leak
Contributing Writer

Reality Mapp and Hadley Anderson are starters for the Central girl's varsity basketball team, with Anderson being the first freshman to start in the last six years. The girls' varsity is 2-17 for this season, with other notable players such as Angeline Smolsky, Legaci McCray and Zoie Johnson, all sophomores. There are no seniors on the team, which means more pressure put on the sophomores

and juniors to be leaders. Mapp, point guard, and Anderson, power forward, have both improved over the season so far. "[They have improved] not only as athletes, but just as people in general as well. Their leadership is standing out more, being more vocal," Head Coach Nicole Mitchell said. Hadley Anderson averages 5.9 points a game, the second best on the team behind Reality Mapp with 7.8. Anderson has the highest field goal and free throw percentage on the team, with 35% for field goals and 53% for free throws. She also has the most

rebounds and steals every game, averaging 4.9 rebounds and 2.8 steals. She has a season high of 11 points against Bellevue West on Jan. 16, and Mapp has a season high of 15 points against Benson on Jan. 2. Mapp and Anderson both have their invaluable impacts on the team. "Hadley, we call her the worm, because that girl can rebound. And then also just her effort, like she's relentless," Mitchell said. Anderson started playing basketball when she was little, but first played on a team in third grade, and continued on others until

joining the Central team. She has played on club and school teams, such as St. Bernards and the club team Marion Junior Crusaders. Now she is a point guard, power forward and small forward for the girl's varsity team. "And Reality, she's our captain. So being voiceful, and not only being voiceful, but demonstrating what we need on the floor," Mitchell said. "I know I don't have to worry about if they come, if they're ready to play or not," Mitchell said. "The impact of their effort and their willingness to be team players, it's just immaculate this year."



Senior Cece Taylor cheers on a teammate.



Sophomore Landon Jensen competes in the breaststroke.



Sophomore Finley Stang competes in the freestyle.

BRADLEY SMITH | The Register

Powerlifters bring home hardware from home meet

Rowen Baptiste
contributing writer

Central’s Boys team got first place while the girls team got second place during the Central Powerlifting Invite on Jan. 17. This included schools from Millard, Gretna, Elkhorn, Westview, Omaha South and Omaha North, among others.

One of the memorable moments was senior Izzy Worden set a new Central record in her 123-pound weight class with a 300-pound deadlift, getting a first-place win.

Central celebrated several other first-place finishes, including senior Russell Calloway, senior Ty’air Williams and Josephine McLaughlin. Other Central powerlifters placed in the top five. Following the meet, some of the powerlifters shared their thoughts on their challenges, and best moments during that meet.

Josephine McLaughlin said it was exciting to finish first. She squatted 250 pounds, 150 in the bench and 290 in the deadlift.

“There was a lot of competition in my weight class, I felt rewarding to get first,” McLaughlin said. But she did have some challenges with being sick.

“I wasn’t preforming exactly how I wanted to,” McLaughlin said. She is proud of her teammates for motivating her and she will be adjusting with lower weight.

Calloway had some challenges with doing personal records in each lift and struggled in some, but he was excited to get first place in his weight class. He squatted 360, 220 in the bench and 435 in the deadlift.



Senior Russell Calloway benchpresses at the Jan. 17 meet at Central High School.



Senior Izzy Worden deadlifts 275lb at the Jan. 17 meet.



Senior Josephine McLaughlin deadlifts at the meet. ROWEN BAPTISTE | The Register

Bowling season wraps up

Jagger Hansen
contributing writer

Freshman Anna Dickerson and Coach Brent Larson were pleased with the bowling team this 25-26 season.

While this was only Dickerson’s first-time bowling, she was able to get a feel for how the team is by playing on varsity and having a score of 167 points, her highest score of the season.

“Younger students like Anna have really stepped up this year on the team,” Larson said. With seniors leaving Central every year, the underclassman must step up on the team.

One of the more challenging parts of this season was the fact that Central did not win as many games as last season. “The most challenging part was that they didn’t get to see the results as a team,” Larson said.

Even though the team may have not

won as many games, they were able to grow and get closer to each other and make friendships with students in different grades.

Dickerson mentioned that most of the teams were upper class students, but they have all helped make the team a better environment.

Dickerson said, “Bowling is a really fun activity to do outside of school and something different for me to try.”

With her being a freshman, she was just

thinking it would be something to keep her busy, but she has grown to love the sport. Dickerson hopes to beat her score by the end of the season.

A goal that Larson had for his players is to medal or to have a state qualifier. Another thing Larson would like is for next season’s players to step on up for the varsity team.

“I would love for those who are on the JV team right now to step up and play on varsity for next year,” Larson said.

CAMBIOS DEL AÑO NUEVO

El final de la era Kirksey



La directora Dionne Kirksey
ISAAC PERCIVAL-AIZENBERG | El Registro

Katie Besancon
editora gerenta

Despues de 35 años con el distrito de las Escuelas Públicas de Omaha (OPS), la directora Dionna Kirksey anuncio en enero que a finales del año escolar 2025-2026 se jubilara.

Kirksey comenzó su carrera en King Science & Technology Magnet Middle School como profesora de estudios sociales de septimo grado antes de cambiarse a South High School, y luego al Centro Administrativo Docente (TAC) para trabajar como asistente personal de estudiantes y especialista comunitaria antes de cambiarse a “downtown high.” Comenzó su tiempo en Central en agosto de 2000 como subdirectora y directora de actividades y asumió la posición de directora en 2021 tras de la partida del doctor Edward Bennett.

Para muchos estudiantes y familias, las noticias de su jubilación fue sorprendente. Sin embargo, para Kirksey, la

decision ha estado grabada en piedra desde el verano, cuando eventos en su vida personal solidificaron que esto seria su ultimo año.

“Los últimos dos años han sido un desafio en su vida personal,” dijo Kirksey.

En una entrevista, Kirksey dijo que aunque el detalle final no sucedió este verano pasado, solo se hubiera quedado en OPS un año o dos más antes de jubilarse.

Cuando llegue el verano, espera poder pasar más tiempo con su madre y familia y no tener que estar con la mente constantemente in un modo de resolución de crisis, “quizás mi cerebro pueda relajarse un poco,” dijo.

En los últimos meses, Central ha aprendido de cambios que tomaron efecto el próximo año escolar, incluyendo la eliminación de los jefes de departamentos y la posibilidad de un dia escolar mas corto. Kirksey dijo que estos cambios no jugaron un papel en su deci-

sion de jubilarse despues de este año académico, pero reconoce la incertidumbre circulando estos cambios.

“Creo que estará bien, creo que cualquier vez que hay cambio a veces anticipamos que no funcionará, pero no creo que eso sea un problema,” dijo Kirksey.

“En el ámbito educativo siempre estamos en constante cambio. También tenemos que prepararnos para el cambio o anticipar como creemos que debería ser ese cambio. Yo tengo que basarme en lo que es lo correcto o en la dirección que creo que debemos tomar a largo plazo en lo que respecta a los resultados y el progreso de los estudiantes,” dijo Kirksey.

Durante su tiempo como directora, los momentos mas agradables han surgido de “viendo como los estudiantes hacen lo que hacen.” Ya sea un baile escolar, un evento esportil, o graduación, Kirksey ha tenido la oportunidad de observar estudiantes en su elemento, haciendo lo que aman.

Kirksey dijo que esos momentos serán una de las cosas que más echara de menos de ser una directora de instituto.

“Poder ver el crecimiento desde el primer año del instituto hasta el ultimo,” dijo Kirksey.

En mayo, Kirksey habrá estado en Central por 26 años.

“He visto mucho, especialmente cuando se trata de donde estaba la educación en 1990 hasta como parece la educación en 2026,” dijo Kirksey.

Central es una escuela conocida por su tradición de excelencia, y Kirksey ha podido ver como esa tradicion ha seguido destacando y adaptándose a pensar de los grandes obstáculos a lo largo de los últimos 26 años.

“He estado siguiendo este calendario de nueve meses durante 35 años, así que será interesante ver como mi mente puede relajarse y como podré hacer cosas diferentes que quizás requieran periodos de tiempo mas largos,” dijo Kirksey.

Estudiantes Venezolanos sobre la captura de Maduro

Eduardo Torreblanca-
Hernandez
escritor

En las horas tempranos de la mañana del tercer día en el año nuevo, expresidente venezolano Nicolás Maduro fue capturado por tropas estadounidense en Caracas. Un poco después de su captura, él fue extraditado a la ciudad de Nueva York a enfrentar cargos criminales para traficando drogas.

La administración Trump anunció que ellos controlaran Venezuela indefinidamente hasta elecciones presidenciales propias han llevado a cabo y el juramento del nuevo presidente.

El Registro entrevisto a dos estudiantes sobre su posición en los eventos en desarrollo en Venezuela sobre la captura de Maduro y adicional involucración estadounidense. Los

estudiantes son Yilver Vezga, quien es del estado de Táchira y ha vivido en Omaha desde 2024; y Jesús Landaeta, quien es del Distrito Federal de Venezuela y ha vivido en Omaha por tres años.

Maduro fue jurado como presidente interino en 2013 después del fallecimiento de expresidente Hugo Chávez y luego él gano la especial elección presidencial el mismo año.

Él fue reelegido en 2018 y en 2024, quien están discutidos y otros países incluyendo los Estados Unidos dijeron las elecciones eran ilegítimas. Durante sus tres mandatos presidenciales, Maduro ha enfrentado acosos de corrupción, violaciones de derechos humanos, y con 8 millones de personas salieron del país.

Cuando fueron preguntado sobre Maduro ya no tiene autoridad, las respuestas eran felices que sacaron a Maduro. Vezga dijo que Maduro tiene muchas cosas para pagar por, y

fue involucrado en un cartel de drogas.

“Se lo merecía, o sea, porque Maduro es un mal presidente y una mala persona,” dijo Landaeta.

Las Escuelas Públicas de Omaha no proporcionaron información sobre el número de estudiantes de Venezuela el en distrito o en Central.

Cuando fueron preguntado sobre adicional involucración estadounidense en Venezuela, las respuestas están mezcladas. “Este Donald Trump, está liderando como este líder de Venezuela, mientras que se pagan los 500 barriles de petróleo” Vezga dijo, refiriendo a Trump vendiendo hasta 50 millones de barriles de petróleo venezolano a los Estados Unidos a un precio estimado de \$500 millón.

Landaeta dijo que Maduro tenía el país pobre sin comida, la población trató hacer protestas contra él, trataron a sacarlo a cual-



Jesús Landaeta
REEGAN MEREDITH | El Registro

quier manera, y “alguien tenía que intervenir y fue Trump, el que intervino.”

Cuando fueron preguntado si cualquier familiar o amigos fueron afectados por los ataques, ambos dijeron que no. Aunque Landaeta dijo que no, él tiene familia en Caracas “donde ocurrieron los bombardeos y ellos pudieron oír lo que sucedió, más nadie se le ha afectado, por suerte,” dijo él.

Bebidas que ya no son elegibles para el SNAP

Grace Sunseri
jefa de corrector

En Nebraska, los usuarios del Programa de Asistencia de Nutrición Suplementaria (SNAP) no pueden comprar refrescos ni bebidas energéticas con sus cupones de alimentos. La Exención de Elección Saludable del SNAP, firmada por el gobernador Jim Pillen y implementar desde el 1 de enero, para “restringir la compra de productos no nutritivos como refrescos y dulces,” según el Servicio de Alimentos y Nutrición del Departamento de Agrticultura de los Estados Unidos. Este exención está diseñado para asegurar que el dinero de los contribuyentes ir exclusivamente a opciones nutritivas.

Esta exención forma parte de la iniciativa más amplia “Make America Healthy Again,” un impulso de la administración Trump que insista a los americanos priorizar las proteínas y las grasas saludables, a la vez que limitan el consumo de alimentos ultra procesados, especialmente alimentos con azúcar agregado.

Secretaria de Agricultura, Brooke Rollins, declaró: “Con estas nuevas exenciones, em-

poderamiento a los estados para que lideran la protection de nuestros niños contra los peligros de los alimentos ultra procesados,” agregado, “desando un paso mas hacia la promesa del presidente de que Estados Unidos vuelva a ser un país saludable”.

Mientras Nebraska fue el primer estado para aceptar una de estas exenciones, muchos estados han seguido su ejemplo. Los artículos excluidos de la elegibilidad para SNAP varían según el estado.

Virginia Occidental y Utah tienen reglas similares a las de Nebraska, mientras que la exención de Florida es mas estricta con los refrescos, las bebidas energéticas, los dulces y los postres preparados están prohibidos bajo la nueva regulación.

El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Nebraska ha recomendado alternativas saludables a etas bebidas. Algunas de estas alternativas aparecen en fotografías.

Las alternativas no fotografiadas son el café, el te verde o negro, la leche, el agua de coco, los batidos y el agua sin gas con infusion de frutas.



CHRISHYRA MARION | El Registro