

## Security

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individual.

Because of open campus qualifications, the school is dealing with its policy in which seniors are allowed two open campus periods per day, plus an open lunch which allows them to leave the school building and/or campus and how that will conflict with optimum precautions. These busy times for school entrances, including the beginning and ending

of a school day, can pose an inconvenience for limited access inside the building.

"The students have been wonderful and even asked if they should individually buzz in or if they can come in as a group," said Yankton High School principal Dr. Jennifer Johnke. "They want to make sure they are following the protocol, which I really appreciate."

Despite such a change from the normal routine, both staff and students are adapting well to the new security measures.

"The transition has actually been fairly smooth,"

Johnke said. "While it will take some adjusting, such as patience at the door and remembering to take your keys with you at all times, we all know that minor inconveniences are nothing when it comes to the safety of our students."

YSD elementary and middle schools have now installed a push button at the front entrance which notifies office personnel to open the door for visitors manually. The elementary schools and YMS will have a camera/buzzer system installed in the next couple of weeks, identical to the

current system at YHS.

Discussions are still being held on additional measures such as emergency protocol plans and other security improvements within the district.

"The staff has been great coming up with new ideas," Stewart Elementary principal Jerome Klimisch said. "We have made adjustments each day to make the transition easier and safer for the students."

Regarding recent events, both students and parents have expressed concerns with school rules and procedures regarding the incident

Thursday. Administration encourages community members to ask questions and be informed on the collaborative effort.

"Everyone realizes that we need to work together to keep everyone safe," Klimisch said. "Kids have been very understanding and they get why we are doing this."

This past year, the school has implemented updates for the security cameras — recently within the elementary schools and last week in the high school. Plans to improve the camera system at the middle school have

been moved up to occur during Christmas break.

With the progress being made in the district's Comprehensive Facilities Study, security will now be a major topic of concern when adjusting funding priorities for facility changes.

"I have only gotten positive comments, as parents, students and staff are appreciative of the extra steps that have been taken for the safety of the students at YHS," Johnke said.

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## Skating

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they can fall in love with the sport," Bratberg said. "It feels really good that I have come that far from way back when I couldn't skate and I was in their same shoes. Now, I am helping them."

Bratberg is part of many upper level skaters who stick with the program and enjoy helping the youth skaters reach their full potential.

"It's fun for the girls to go out there with no pressure and get some practice with an

audience," she said. "It is a lot different skating by yourself as opposed to in front of an audience or with a group of people."

There will be 18 skaters performing in this showcase — 12 of them will be solos and three of them duets. The event will also feature two group performances, all to the theme of holiday classics.

This year's figure skaters include 45 students ages 4-18. As part of the ISI, participants are to complete different tests based on their skill levels. Each test must be performed in order for the skater to advance a level. There are four introductory levels and

10 freestyle levels.

"It is always fun when a skater moves up," Erickson said. "They get a certificate, a badge and lots of encouragement. That is what we want to do. We want to build that excitement so our program keeps building."

The season begins in October with the "Discover the World" open house event. This is a free, open session for all skaters interested in participating in figure skating. Coaches will go through certain skills and upper-level skaters demonstrate some of the moves that students would learn throughout the classes.

Beginners and new inductees start off with YALA's Learn to Skate program. This initial class exposes young skaters to the basics and gives more advanced skaters the opportunity to test through their appropriate skill levels. The organization holds designated times throughout the season for skaters to test in front of coaches and continue up the ladder, including at the beginning, middle and end of the season.

This weekend, all skaters will be tested from all levels to make sure they are properly placed in accordance with their current skills.

"It has nothing to do with

age," Erickson said. "We have one skater that is a third grader who is a freestyle 2 level. We have some skaters that are older or younger than her on different skill levels. It is all based on how much they practice and how much time they dedicate to it."

The "Holiday on Ice" performance is also a good way to help skaters practice for competition. YALA figure skaters are currently working towards Blue Mound Ice Crystal Classic competition in Luverne, Minnesota, in mid-January and the Frosty Blades competition in Blaine, Minnesota in early February. Also in February, YALA will host its

second ISI-certified competition that brings skaters from outside the community in to compete.

"I encourage people to come and see what our skaters can do," Erickson said. "We hope people that can at least come watch, and maybe next year there will be an increased interest in people who want to be a part of our program."

For youth still wanting to sign up, Yankton figure skaters will have their second session of Learn to Skate classes beginning Jan. 5.

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## Medicaid

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that opportunity, I believe," Daugaard said, adding that he shares some lawmakers' concerns about expansion.

"It bothers me that some people who can work will become more dependent on government," he said. "I hate that. I hate dependency."

The plan may face a difficult path in South Dakota's Republican-dominated Legislature. House Majority Whip Don Haggar, a Republican, said he doesn't believe the chamber will support expanding the program.

But Democratic legislative leaders, who have supported expansion for several years, celebrated the move.

"It looks like it's a very real possibility," Senate Minority Leader Billie Sutton said.

Daugaard also indicated support for using new state money to increase teacher salaries in South Dakota, but has said specific proposals

will come during his State of the State Address.

House Minority Leader Spencer Hawley said he's disappointed with a "mere reference" to teacher pay in the governor's budget, but said Democratic legislators are supportive of many provisions including a proposal to keep steady the cost of getting a degree.

Much of the roughly \$60 million one-time spending in the governor's budget would go to paying off debt to help the state's public universities and technical schools freeze tuition for the next school year.

The proposal shows South Dakota is committed to higher education, said Mike Rush, executive director and CEO of the state Board of Regents. He said the freeze would reduce the amount students have to borrow or pay out of pocket for school.

The budget plan also adds more than \$80 million for the upcoming budget year in general state spending, in part through savings. The money would go to increases

to higher education, Medicaid providers and state workers. The governor is also pushing for extra funding for some lower-paid providers.

Daugaard has said state revenue improvements allowed him to propose larger increases than otherwise would have been possible.

The state closed the fiscal year that ended on June 30 with a budget surplus, piling up \$21.5 million more than projections because of higher revenues and lower-than-anticipated spending.

Stronger receipts in construction and insurance taxes coupled with lower spending for education and Medicaid were largely responsible for the surplus for the 2015 budget year.

Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jason Dilges said those trends have continued into the current budget year.

"This is an exciting time for South Dakota," Daugaard said. "We've managed our state well, I believe, and we have the opportunity to make great progress this year."

## Store

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Store board members with monetary donations.

The store is set up so children, accompanied by an adult volunteer, choose gifts for family members. The gifts are then wrapped by other volunteers before being handed over to the child. The parents or guardians who accompany the children to the church wait outside the store and are served coffee and cookies.

"You would be surprised at how much joy the children get out of it," Dick said. The event is not limited for kids from low-income families.

"We don't care if they

have one dollar or a million dollars," Dick said. "Kids are kids. They can come in and shop."

The store is a perfect legacy for Ann's message of giving before receiving.

"It's all about her and the kids," Dick said. "She had a special way with kids. Instead of talking down to them, she'd talk to them like regular people. They'd flock to her."

Christmas Store board vice president Barb Clayton works year-round to prepare for the next event, from spreading the word and gathering donations to helping with any and every task on that day.

"It was Ann's belief that if you taught children to give when they were young, they would grow up to be adults that would still be giving,"

Clayton said. "I enjoy the spirit of Christmas and the camaraderie the store brings to people. The kids love to shop and are excited to give presents."

The Christmas Store continues to thrive because of strong community support, Clayton said.

"When I wonder how we can get this or that done, more people offer their help," she said. "It's been a wonderful community thing and we're so thrilled to do this because it's much needed."

People interested in volunteering or donating to the Christmas Store can contact Dick Hudson at 661-7700 or Barb Clayton at 660-2783.

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