

WACO Community Schools

www.wacocsd.org P. O. Box 158 Wayland, Iowa 52654

Dear Parents,

As we continue with our J-Term for the 2018/2019 School year we wanted to take the opportunity to explain a little about the process, the courses, and the outcomes. J-Term or “January-Term” is the first six days between first and second semester this year. It will run from 1/3/19 - 1/10/2019. This is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a single subject or project for six straight days. The classes are typically hands-on, nontraditional, and out of the box learning events. Attached to this letter is an explanation of the J-Term activities that WACO 7-12 students will have an opportunity to participate in. Additionally, your student has already chosen a group, so this is a great opportunity to speak with your son or daughter about their choice, and continue that conversation throughout the entire J-Term!

As a parent I always find myself asking educational questions, so I thought that I would take this opportunity to answer some questions that you may have.

What are the benefits to students? (Otherwise known as- Why in the world are you doing this?)

Our students take their semester exams before Christmas (no Christmas break studying, pure family time!). This is a great way to give our students a mental break from the traditional program while exploring topics that are new or interesting to them. Many groups are taking field trips, listening to guest speakers, providing community products, and exploring personal interests during this time. These activities involve higher level thinking and learned career soft skills. They will be working with and as a group for the entirety of the term. Lastly, we believe that this is putting students in charge of their own learning and we firmly believe that J-Term escapes the traditional learning environment.

Why is this good for teachers? (Otherwise known as- “Do teachers even like this time?”)

While this is only my first year I can tell you that our teachers are excited about the learning as much as or more so than students. This is a break from the classroom and an opportunity to see different students learn new skills. Many of our teachers are team teaching these J-Term activities, which also allows for new ideas and teaching techniques. Lastly, this is a chance for our teachers to share a passion with students who also have that passion. I’m not sure about you, but I cannot find a better way to connect with students other than through a similar passion. This a great relationship building time for students and staff.

Who benefits, and what are the challenges? (Otherwise known as- “What else do I need to know?”)

You. You as a parent should see the benefit through the conversations with your son and/or daughter. You should see and hear engagement in their project and in their descriptions to you about their day. I certainly ask the age-old question- “What did you do at school today?” without an answer, and J-Term will give an answer to that question.

The community. Many of our groups are community service oriented. Our students and staff naturally gravitate towards improving the world around them. J-Term gives them a real opportunity to share a passion while working on a project.

Your child, your school, your teachers. As mentioned above the benefits to the school as a whole are numerous and our hope is that J-Term gives learning a new face, and instills a passion in everyone involved.

WACO Community Schools

www.wacocsd.org P. O. Box 158 Wayland, Iowa 52654

Our challenge is time. Like many things in life, time is not always on our side. The amount of preparation and time devoted to J-Term leaves me in awe of the work that our teachers do. From courses, transportation, time management, expenses, and planning, the obstacles are many. Our teachers do an absolutely amazing job of doing what is best for kids and putting them first. It is for these reasons that J-Term will be a success.

Lastly, on January 10th at WACO Jr/Sr High School, we will host a presentation night where groups will display their results and projects for families, friends, community members, and each other! You are invited to attend this night on JANUARY 10th, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Jr/Sr High School.

Thank you for your support, and please feel free to contact me with any questions, or comments.

Tim Bartels
Principal
WACO Jr/Sr High School

J-Term Team: Sarah Peters, Rick Moorman, Kristina Gelfand, Kate Lefeber, Barbi Roth, and Drew Ayrit

WACO Community Schools

www.wacocsd.org P. O. Box 158 Wayland, Iowa 52654

2019 WACO J-Term Class Offerings

1. **Airbrush Art** (with Mr. Schmida)
 - a. Students will explore airbrush art and careers that go along with it. They will start off small and hopefully work up to creating a mural for the Wayland Youth Center.
2. **Business & BBQ** (with Mr. Dugger & Mr. Shettler)
 - a. Students will gain valuable woodworking skills to build Adirondack chairs. They will also learn some grilling and barbeque basics.
3. **Community, Career, Volunteer!** (with Mrs. Klett & Mrs. Koch)
 - a. Students will be traveling out into the surrounding communities to gain valuable work and volunteer experiences.
4. **Designing the Dream** (with Mr. Whitten & Mr. Kissell)
 - a. Students will travel to the Kirkwood Regional Center in Washington and complete a Computer Aided Drafting (using Revit software) building based project.
5. **Chalk It Up!** (with Mrs. DeVaul)
 - a. Students will take a furniture piece and repurpose it using a chalk paint technique. They will then sell the updated piece on a website they create.
6. **Fantasy FX** (with Ms. Peters & Mr. Ayrit)
 - a. Cosplay exploration. Students will combine creativity and technical skill to design and assume the identity of a character that they feel a connection with.
7. **Living on a Dime** (with Mrs. Weir & Mrs. Lefeber)

WACO Community Schools

www.wacocsd.org P. O. Box 158 Wayland, Iowa 52654

- a. Students will learn to create a budget and financially live on their own, furnish/refurbish furniture, and gain confidence to enter adulthood.
8. **Media Center Makeover** (with Mrs. Newman)
 - a. Students will explore the basics of interior design by doing a media center makeover. They will be painting and updating our book collection.
9. **Rental Renovation** (with Mrs. Roth & Mrs. Gelfand)
 - a. Students will work with skilled craftsmen to participate in various jobs to renovate a building into apartments. Students will also learn the business end of things from a realtor, accountant, and property manager.
10. **The Tasty Challenge** (with Mrs. Reichenbach & Mr. Edeker)
 - a. Students will collaboratively create a modern online digital cookbook of WACO community recipes.
11. **“Within the Walls” Fitness** (with Mr. Moorman)
 - a. Students will help develop a short-term recreation program. They will be helping with supervision, administrating, operating, and developing recreation activities for other student groups during J-Term.