

JFK Weekly Newsletter

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Friday, December 12, 2025

The past few weeks have been unprecedented for our district. As many of you know, one of our second-grade students and their mother were detained by ICE. This situation has been deeply distressing for the family and our community. Superintendent Chavarría has called for their immediate release, and our district team is working closely to support the family with care and urgency. Our highest priority continues to be the safety, dignity, and well-being of every student in Winooski.

At the same time, our schools have received a wave of hateful messages and online harassment in reaction to the district raising of the Somali flag, an act intended as a simple, heartfelt show of love and solidarity with our Somali students and families. This act unfortunately became the target of political backlash. We want to be clear: supporting our children, welcoming them, and affirming their identity is not political. It is human, it is kind, and it is part of who we are as a district.

We continue to work closely with the Winooski Police Department and state partners, who are monitoring communication and helping ensure the safety of all students and staff. School remains safe and continues to operate normally. Our educators and support staff have been outstanding, maintaining steady routines, centering learning, and helping students feel secure, cared for, and supported throughout the day.

As a multilingual district, our communication takes time to translate so that all families receive the consistent information. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and compassion as we continue to navigate this moment with clarity and care.

Please know that we are here for you and your children. If your child expresses worry or has questions, we encourage you to reach out to school staff or administrators so we can support them.

School & Classroom Highlights

Despite the challenges of recent weeks, our classrooms have remained joyful, engaging, and full of learning. Our staff have worked hard to keep routines steady and supportive, and our students continue to amaze us with their curiosity, resilience, and kindness.

Across the school, students have been diving into rich literacy experiences acting out scenes from stories, practicing retelling with beginnings, middles, and ends, and exploring characters, settings, and central messages. Some classes are learning about the sun, moon, and stars, while others are studying schools around the world and thinking deeply about what children need to learn and thrive.

In math, students have been building problem-solving stamina and applying foundational skills in new ways. Whether exploring two-digit addition, solving story problems, working with number lines, or discovering how to break apart shapes to find area, classrooms are full of mathematicians explaining their thinking and celebrating “aha” moments.

Fine-motor skills, writing, and hands-on exploration remain an important part of the school day. Students are tracing letters, painting, reading in multiple languages, and practicing independence, especially with winter gear. Staff are helping children build confidence as they learn to zip coats, pull on snow pants, and get themselves ready for outdoor play.

Our library has been buzzing with excitement as students explore new books and multilingual stories, including shared read-alouds in multiple languages. These moments highlight what makes Winooski special: a community that celebrates all languages and cultures.

Students continue to learn about the world around them through inquiry and creativity from designing buildings that can withstand hurricanes to researching artists and exploring what inspires their work. Hands-on activities, role play, and small-group work are giving students opportunities to collaborate, think critically, and express themselves.

Students are engaging in thematic units such as “Community Helpers,” exploring real tools, learning new vocabulary, and making connections to their everyday lives, including our hardworking cafeteria team.

And, as always, we are committed to meeting students’ basic needs. With the help of community partners, we’ve distributed new winter coats and continued Wednesday food distribution and twice-monthly Veggie Van Go. These supports help ensure students can arrive ready to learn and feel cared for.

Every day, our spaces are full of learning, laughter, and moments of connection and we are so grateful for the families who partner with us to make this possible.

Thank You

Thank you for standing with our students, families, and staff. Thank you for your patience as we navigate complex circumstances. And thank you for continuing to show up with kindness, trust, and community spirit.

Winooski is strong because we take care of each other.

Please reach out to us if you need anything at all.

JFK Calendar

December 24, 2025 - January 2, 2026

No School Prek-12, Mid Winter Break

January 15, 2025

8:30 am All School Morning Meeting

January 19, 2026

No School PK-12 - MLK Day

JFK Elementary



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