Fall 2026 Inspiring News Topic – FIRST DRAFT

Welcome to the 2026–27 school year! We hope it's off to a great start for our students, staff, and families.

As the pace of change in our world and community continues to accelerate, it is increasingly important for the district and School Board to focus not only on day-to-day operations, but also on preparing for the future. Here are several examples of that work:

Flight Plan 2035 – In 2015, the district launched its Designing Pathways 10-year academic visioning process, which helped shape the innovative and personalized learning opportunities available to students today. Last year, we began Flight Plan 2035, a community-driven process involving students, staff, families, community members, and business leaders to envision where we want our district and students to be in 2035.

Flight Plan 2035 identifies four priorities that should guide the programs and experiences we provide:

1. Student Wellbeing
2. Inspired Learning
3. Future-Ready Skills
4. Real-World Application

Learn more at: Flight Plan 2035

Technology

Purposeful and mindful technology use is an area of focus in Flight Plan 2035. Eden Prairie School District staff are leading the way in national organizations working on the thoughtful use of technology in educational settings by facilitating and presenting on the use of artificial intelligence. In addition, for several years, the district's AI committee has been exploring how to use AI productively in education and what students and staff need to know and be able to do in an AI-enabled world.

The School Board has also been discussing screen time for several years. In 2024, we invited University of Minnesota professor Jodi Dworkin to share research on technology, parenting, and adolescent development. A key takeaway was that technology use should be intentional and goal directed. The Board will continue to monitor research and outcomes in this area.

Board Policy Updates – We are also reviewing our student achievement policies, which have not been updated in several years. Our work began with the literacy policy, currently focused on students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. While that remains an important milestone, we believe the policy should take a broader view of literacy and student development across all grade levels.

The revised policy will likely include reading, digital literacy, and data literacy at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. We are also exploring policies focused on essential life and work skills, including financial literacy, interdisciplinary problem-solving, emerging technologies, collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking.

Financial Sustainability – Years of community support and diligent work by the district finance team have put Eden Prairie in a stable financial position that is very different from many other districts. Passage of the 2022 referendum promised to extend financial stability for at least five years. Although it is difficult to predict the future of education funding, the district is working hard to extend that promise. Our most recent community survey conducted in June and July found that 91% feel schools provide good investment value. We are so grateful for strong community support.

Together, this work reflects our commitment to ensuring Eden Prairie Schools continues to prepare students not just for today, but for the opportunities and challenges ahead.