



Menahga Principal's Board Report

Steph Mercil and Michelle Koch
October, 2026

Elementary School Update



Staffing: Continue to monitor and hire for paras as needed. Collaborating district wide to remain efficient with our staffing.

Team Meetings: Teachers are digging in and supporting the work throughout the building in all areas. Since the last board meeting teachers have stayed after school, before school, or worked during their day to learn together, review data, and help students succeed.

Staff Meetings: Principal Award, Nuts and Bolts, Learn from Each Other

ELA meetings: working with Sourcewell consultant to apply a rubric to materials. Including 6,7,8 ELA teachers.

Leadership Team Meeting: Learn together, address common areas of concerns or planning items, looking at technology.

PBIS meeting: District wide meeting with teacher reps K-12. Review behavior matrixes and positive reinforcements

Interventionist meetings: Finalizing schedules, reviewing data and student progress

IEP/504 meetings:

Targeted Services will begin October 22 for grades 1-5, K will begin in January

Fall Screening Complete:

Student at or above grade level: K - 60% early reading

1 - 37% early reading

4- 78%

2 - 52% areading

5- 65%

3- 68% areading

6-68%

Golden Awards: At the end of each month, respective leaders choose the best classroom for the Golden Broom, Tray, Book, and Frisbee. A special celebration and picture is taken and the class gets to display the item proudly for the month.

MESPA Leadership Retreat: I attended the Minnesota Elementary Principals Association Fall retreat. Sessions included a Legal seminar- (new AI policy coming, depending on which party takes the majority several education initiatives could be changed/overtaken), supporting and encouraging aspiring principals (we have 6 teachers in an admin program currently!) planning of division meetings, keynote speaker - importance of relationships, laughter, and having fun with students and colleagues.

Homecoming/Fire Safety/BookBlast Fun: Elementary students participated in dress up days, pepfest, and parade for Homecoming. They love seeing the other Braves and being included. Wolf Lake and Menahga Fire came to educate students on fire safety practices and gave tours of their fire trucks and equipment. Students are excited to participate in the 2nd Bookblast where they will each receive a book and have potential to earn more books and prizes.

Staff Development Oct 19: ELA committee had a work session to review materials. Special ed teachers and paras participated in CPI refresher, time to work in classrooms and to complete teacher growth plans, staff meetings (including training on being careful of what to click on through email)

Important Dates & Reminders

- **Oct. 12** - Indigenous Peoples' Day
- **Oct. 13** - District PBIS Team Meeting at 7:30 AM
- **Oct. 15-16** - No School (EM Break)
- **Oct. 19** - No School, Staff Development Day
- **Nov. 6** - End of Quarter 1
- **Nov. 12** - No School, Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **Nov. 13** - No School, Staff Development Day
- **Nov. 25** - Early Release
- **Nov. 26-27** - No School, Thanksgiving Break

High School Update!



Homecoming 2026: 2026 Homecoming – Tropical Takeover!

What an incredible Homecoming Week at Menahga High School! Our 2026 Tropical Takeover was a tremendous success, filled with school spirit, excitement, and Brave pride!

Congratulations to our Homecoming King Connor and Queen Sophie, who were outstanding representatives and leaders throughout the week! Our student Super Fans were absolutely incredible, bringing energy, enthusiasm, and school spirit to every event. Participation in our dress-up days was fantastic, and it was wonderful to see students and staff getting involved and celebrating together.

Our Braves also had a great week of competition, with exciting performances and successes in Cross Country, Volleyball, and Football! The Homecoming Parade was another highlight, with wonderful participation from our students, staff, and community.

A sincere thank you to everyone who helped make this week so memorable. From planning and decorating to supervising and supporting our students, it truly takes a team!

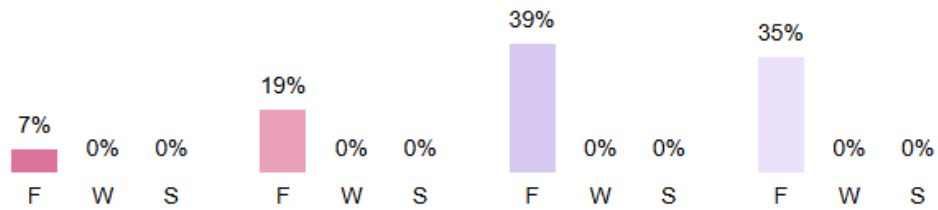
Homecoming is about so much more than activities and athletics. It is about building connections, creating memories, and celebrating what makes Menahga such a special place. This week was a perfect example of our Brave pride and the amazing school community we have!

Assessments:

Thank you to our staff for working side by side with Andria to complete our Fastbridge Fall Benchmark testing. We know that we did miss some students, but overall, it was a great success. Now we take our data, plug it into the next step of Capti assessments. We will be providing the Capti assessment to all required to take it on Oct. 21st throughout the day. Mrs. Takkunen and Ms. Bristow will be taking the lead in those assessments.

7-12 aReading

Scores Of Students In Group By Benchmark Categories: ?

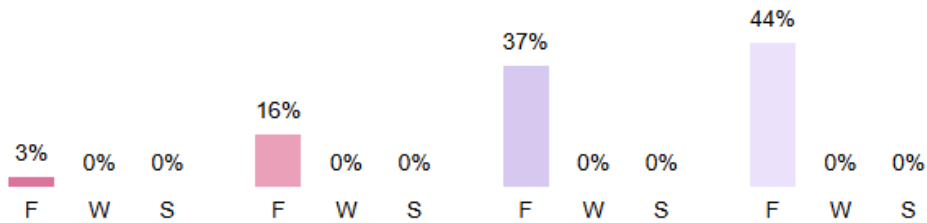


Grade		Median Student			
		Fall Score	Winter Score	Spring Score	
SEVEN		534 0 30 41 29(%)	(%)	(%)	
EIGHT		546 10 22 29 39(%)	(%)	(%)	
NINE		549 6 20 45 29(%)	(%)	(%)	
TEN		554 8 6 44 42(%)	(%)	(%)	
ELEVEN		556 12 16 31 41(%)	(%)	(%)	
TWELVE		556 6 17 51 26(%)	(%)	(%)	
Average		549.30	-	-	
Median		551.63	-	-	

high risk
 some risk
 low risk
 Exceeds

7-12 aMath

Scores Of Students In Group By Benchmark Categories: ?



Grade	Median Student					
	Fall Score	Winter Score	Spring Score			
SEVEN	228					
	1 12 44 43(%)	(%)	(%)			
EIGHT	232					
	3 18 30 49(%)	(%)	(%)			
NINE	233					
	3 15 44 38(%)	(%)	(%)			
TEN	236					
	5 21 26 48(%)	(%)	(%)			
ELEVEN	236					
	2 13 44 41(%)	(%)	(%)			
TWELVE	240					
	4 14 32 50(%)	(%)	(%)			
Average	234.16	-	-			
Median	234.36	-	-			

high risk some risk low risk Exceeds

Seeing Success: First Semester is up and running. Students are engaged and working hard. Baileigh has done an amazing job with balancing classes, honoring requests from students and staff. She is continuing to meet with Seniors and eCHS and PSEO students. In her spare time she has the second semester mapped out and is meeting with staff to build course engagement and advertisements!

Lunch and Recess Success: Four lunch blocks all with recess attached!

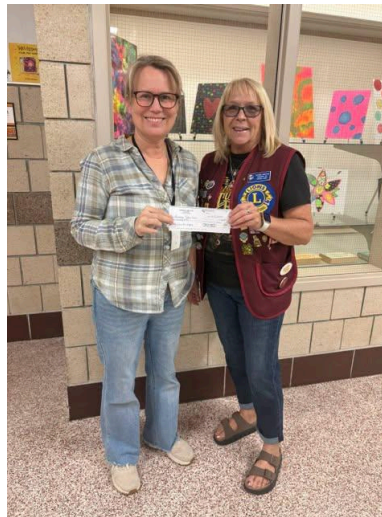
Career Pathways: We met with our Sourcewell Support team to specifically look at the 26-27 Career Pathways Action Plan. We are fully set up for success K-12! Baileigh has scheduled 8th Grade to the NYM Cultural Center and 10th Grade to Camp Ripley (including the new Museum). The 7th graders went to the Clean Plate on Wednesday, Oct. 14th. Our 7th graders explored healthy food choices, nutrition, organic products, and where our food comes from during their visit to A Clean Plate. Students also learned about running a small business, customer service, and careers in food, agriculture, and nutrition. This hands-on experience connects classroom learning to our Career Pathways and real-world opportunities in our community.

Exciting Active/Hands On Learning: Mr. Zadnikar's High School Physics class put their engineering skills to the test this week! Students designed and built bridges, then tested their strength yesterday! CONGRATS to Elsa Simonson and Julia Lake, whose bridge held over 200 POUNDS! To really put their bridge to the test, Elsa even STOOD on it while holding additional weights! Talk about a strong design! Outstanding job to ALL of our students!



District PBIS Team: Our continued investment in PBIS reflects our commitment to creating safe, positive, and supportive learning environments where all students and staff can thrive. We are finding ways to celebrate our staff and students daily.

Thank You: We want to thank the Menahga Lions for their generous donations to our Art League, 5th Grade Coffee Shop, and FFA students attending the National FFA Convention! Menahga Lions member Shar Lusti presented the check in support of these student opportunities. Your generosity helps our students explore their creativity, build valuable skills, and enjoy memorable learning experiences. Thank you for your continued support of our students and school community!



4th Annual Big Buck and Big Doe: We already have entries coming in! Thanks to Smokey Hills Outdoor Store and D. Rinke Farms for sponsoring!



7-12 Advisory Time: Beginning second quarter, we will introduce our new Wednesday Advisory (Brave Connections) program. Baileigh has worked hard to most effectively assign students to the Brave Connections. Stay tuned!

Menahga Principal Goals for 2026-2027 that were developed at the June Leadership retreat.

Goal 1: Focus on Climate and Culture at Menahga Public Schools

Our school will strengthen a positive, inclusive, and collaborative culture by increasing students' and staff members' sense of belonging, safety, and engagement, as measured by annual climate survey results.

- Partner with Till360 for a Back to School message and follow up sessions with staff and students.
- Administer a climate survey to staff
- Re commit to PBIS practices

Goal 2: Strengthen Literacy and Academic Achievement

Ensure all students achieve at high levels by implementing evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the Minnesota READ Act, closing racial and economic achievement gaps, and building staff capacity in differentiated instruction to support the diverse needs of learners.

- Elementary will be participation in curricular pilots, collecting data, and collaborating to determine the best choice of ELA resources for our students K-6.
- District teams will resume Professional Learning Communities with a new name, Brave Learning Teams(BLT's).

Goal 3: Expand Career Pathways and Authentic Learning Opportunities

Increase student engagement and readiness for college, career, and life by developing cross-curricular, career-connected learning experiences; expanding community and business partnerships; and providing authentic, hands-on opportunities such as senior capstone projects and internships.

Goal 4: Support the Whole Child and Invest in Staff Development

Provide comprehensive supports that meet the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students, while ensuring every student has a positive connection with a caring adult. Strengthen staff recruitment, professional development, and training—including emerging tools such as AI—to sustain a future-focused and supportive learning environment.

- Follow up training is planned with William Grube for Nov 13th, and also plans for working with students.

Menahga School District Enrollment

Grade Level	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	March	April	May	
PreK	52	53							
K	52	51							
1	76	75							
2	65	66							
3	70	70							
4	70	70							
5	73	71							
6	63	62							
7	73	73							
8	71	71							
9	72	71							
10	74	73							
11	84	80							
12	61	60							
Total		946							
Menahga Online		426							
Total		1372							

Respectfully submitted,

Steph Mercil and Michelle Koch