



ADMINISTRATION REPORTS OCTOBER 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & HUMAN RESOURCES

By: Shawn Kirkeide

Staff Retention

Cambridge-Isanti Schools continues to make positive progress in staff retention. Teacher retention has increased from 88% to 94% over the past three years, while voluntary resignations have decreased by 50%. Special Education Instructional Assistant departures have also decreased by 40%, with improved new-hire retention. While special education staffing remains a priority, our continued focus on mentorship, licensure pathways, onboarding, and employee well-being is helping us build a supportive workplace and provide greater stability for our students.

Flu Shot Clinic

We have added a Flu Shot Clinic again this year during the week of October 12, and participation continues to grow. This year, over 75 staff members and their families took part. We're excited to continue offering this opportunity through our Wellness Committee to support the health and well-being of our Bluejacket staff.

Wellness

The Wellness Committee is excited to offer two opportunities for staff to focus on their well-being and build connections with colleagues. **Free yoga classes** will begin October 19 at Cambridge Middle School and October 27 at Woodland Campus, providing opportunities to reduce stress, improve focus, and support overall wellness. Additionally, a **staff book club** will kick off November 2, offering employees a chance to connect, share ideas, and engage in meaningful conversations.

OPERATIONS

Building & Grounds

Our Buildings and Grounds team continues to support safe, welcoming, and well-maintained learning environments across the district. At the CPIS Complex, the team's extensive preparation and coordination with environmental specialists supported testing that was conducted October 14–16 as part of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's ongoing environmental assessment. Testing included sub-slab and indoor air sampling, with no disruption to regular building activities over MEA Break.

Other recent projects include replacing radiant heat panels and completing several plumbing repairs at CPS, installing a backflow prevention valve at Cambridge Middle School, replacing a fan motor bearing at Isanti Intermediate, and adding temporary walls to create office spaces at Isanti Primary.

Most of this work was completed at the end of last week. Finally, we are pleased to report that the high school gym bleacher project is now fully complete, including the installation of new handrails and resolution of all remaining punch list items.

We extend our sincere thanks to the entire Buildings and Grounds team for managing the extensive CPIS project while supporting the needs of every building throughout the start of the school year. Their teamwork, flexibility, and dedication help keep our schools ready for students, staff, and community members each day.

Transportation

The Transportation Department is off to a strong start this school year, successfully navigating extensive road construction throughout the district while helping students arrive safely and ready to learn. The team continues to adjust routes and respond to changing construction conditions with flexibility and clear communication. As we move into the second month of school, drivers focus on building positive relationships with students and reinforcing safe, consistent routines. Partnerships with principals, Student Support Services, and teachers help drivers understand individual student needs and create a welcoming environment during transportation to and from school. Districtwide evacuation drills on September 30 further strengthened student safety and preparedness. Recruitment and training of additional drivers remain priorities to support reliable service and strengthen route coverage.

Technology

The first month and a half is in the books, and the technology department is excited to report that it has been a busy but successful year so far. All systems are up and running well with very little downtime. All of the summer systems projects continue to move forward as we continue to support and build capacity in our users. Here are a few key highlights:

- The district continues to run its optional Chromebook Protection Plan. Each year, students/parents are required to complete a Chromebook User Agreement, which provides them with the opportunity to participate in the Chromebook Protection Plan in the event that accidental damage is caused to the district-issued device. The cost for this plan is \$30 per year; it is optional to participate in. This year, the district has collected around its average amount over the last 5 years, which is right around \$32,000.
- C-I Schools is addressing some deficiencies and much-needed repairs to some of its cameras across the district by utilizing \$31,000 from Round 2 of the MN State Cybersecurity Grant program. This will allow us to address things such as broken cameras and the replacement of some old analog cameras that have poor visibility due to their glass domes being faded or damaged. In this situation, where the domes are damaged, the cameras are so old that replacement domes are not an option.
- As a department, we continue to install 24-inch monitors across the district. The majority of these monitors were donated to the district by Xcel Energy.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

By: Christina Thayer Anderson

Early Learning: Focusing on Relationships and Early Literacy

Our fall program kickoff centers on building strong relationships with families and welcoming our youngest Bluejackets. Early Learning staff focus on helping children feel safe, connected, and ready to explore while establishing trusting partnerships with parents and caregivers. These first connections help families feel comfortable asking questions, sharing their children's strengths and needs, and becoming active partners in learning.

Early literacy is an important part of this foundation. Through stories, songs, conversation, and purposeful play, children build vocabulary, explore sounds and language, and develop an interest in books and reading. Alongside these experiences, children practice cooperation, independence, and expressing their needs. This work supports the whole child and helps establish confidence, curiosity, and a strong foundation for kindergarten and continued learning.

Serving Adult Learners Across the Region

Adult Education continues to expand access to learning across our region, serving adults in Cambridge, Princeton, Mora, and Braham, partnering with Anoka-Ramsey Community College, and now providing services at the Isanti County Jail. Our programs offer English language courses, career advancement opportunities, and support for learners age 17 and older working toward a GED. Partnerships with Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) connect education with workforce resources and career pathways. This expansion brings learning opportunities to adults who face barriers to participation and supports their next steps in education, employment, and community life.

Celebrating Lights On Afterschool

This month, we celebrate Lights On Afterschool, a nationwide event recognizing the important role afterschool programs play in the lives of children, families, and communities. Research summarized continues to show that quality afterschool programs support school attendance and engagement, academic growth, and physical and mental well-being. These findings reinforce the value of opportunities such as Adventure Center, youth enrichment and recreation, and Middle School Hangout—places where students build relationships, explore interests, and stay active and connected beyond the school day.

We are grateful for the leaders and staff who make these programs possible, as well as the coaches, advisors, and staff supporting all of the clubs, athletics, and activities across the district. Their work creates meaningful opportunities for students to discover their strengths and experience a sense of belonging in our Bluejacket community.

TEACHING & LEARNING

By: Tracy Hare

Over the past month, the Teaching and Learning team (along with support from our District Instructional Leadership Team) has continued work across several district priorities:

- **Professional Learning and PLC Support:** Planning and preparation for our October 9th PD day, including developing and reviewing Knowledge and Skill Objectives, PLC goal-setting

supports, and resources to help teams connect student outcomes to building and district priorities. Planning has also begun for the January 18 academic PD day and February 12 wellness-focused PD day, including gathering staff interest in leading peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

- **Data, Assessment, and Continuous Improvement:** Continued work with DILT to strengthen how staff access, understand, and use student data. Teams have been identifying early indicators, reviewing PLC and Continuous Improvement Plan goals, and preparing for a fall data review focused on making district data systems more useful and efficient for instructional decision-making.
- **Systems and Student Support:** Teaching and Learning continues to support the transition to Skyward Qmlativ, including assessment, reporting, data access, and workflow needs

Overall, this work creates greater consistency across the district by clarifying what students need to know and do, helping teams use data more effectively, supporting strong instruction, and building systems that better support student success.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

By: Rachel Kasper

Special Education Vertical PLC Update: EBD & DCD/ASD

During our October 9 Professional Development morning, our district's Special Education vertical PLC teams engaged in collaborative work to strengthen district-wide program alignment, shared expectations, and consistent supports across Cambridge-Isanti Schools.

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD) PLC

Our EBD team focused on aligning Setting III and IV programming district-wide.

- **Praise & Key Focus Areas:** Standardizing SEL and academic tools (*Wit & Wisdom*, *UFLI*, *Everyday Math*, *Saxon Math*, *Everyday Speech*, *Zones of Regulation*) to ensure predictable, structured daily environments. Staff also reinforced a data-driven Setting 3 LRE framework that anchors mainstream minutes directly to skill mastery, FBAs, and goal progress.
- **Grade-Band Breakouts:** The E–5 cohort focused on daily routines (soft starts, motor labs, task boxes) and gradual mainstreaming during specials/recess. The 6–12 cohort addressed secondary period transitions, departmentalized logistics, state transition standards, and credit accrual.
- **Next Steps:** Streamlining SEL progress tracking across settings, strengthening general education transition workflows, and utilizing upcoming coaching for Behavior Support Plans (BSPs) and fidelity checklists.

Developmental Cognitive Disabilities / Autism Spectrum Disorders (DCD/ASD) PLC

Our Center-Based DCD/ASD team met to advance program consistency and shared instructional practices to increase student engagement and independence.

- **Praise & Key Focus Areas:** Streamlining core visual supports (First/Then schedules, sequence strips, core vocabulary) and establishing Fall/Spring Functional Checklists alongside shared resources like *Autism Little Learners* and *STAR*.
- **Grade-Band Breakouts:** The Primary cohort targeted foundational communication stations, fine motor routines, and earning mainstream time. The Secondary cohort focused on high school functional life skills, social thinking, elective scheduling access, and community-based learning.
- **Next Steps:** Establishing standardized IEP templates and spring case-manager transition meetings for building-to-building moves, preparing for an October 29 Assistive Technology "Make & Take" switch-adapting event, and addressing IA support allocations.

Thank you to all of our special education educators and facilitators for their ongoing leadership and commitment to supporting every student, every day!

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

By: Dr. Nate Rudolph

The past month has been busy across the district as we have moved from the start of the school year into the important work of supporting student learning, strengthening operations, and addressing several districtwide priorities.

Strategic Plan and Student Learning

Our October 9 professional development day provided valuable time for staff to collaborate around instructional practices, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), student learning goals, and continued improvement. We continue working with district and building leadership to align this work with our Strategic Plan and ensure our priorities translate into meaningful experiences and outcomes for students.

Finance Leadership Transition

We have been working closely with Julie Cink, our Interim Director of Finance, as she becomes familiar with district operations, budgets, financial processes, and staff. Our immediate priorities include reviewing Title and Special Education funding, supporting the Finance and Payroll teams, and preparing for upcoming financial reporting and Board decisions. We are also coordinating the transition of operational responsibilities and continuing preparations for the permanent Director of Finance and Operations search.

Facilities and Operations

Facilities remain an important area of focus. Environmental testing at Cambridge Primary-Isanti School (CPIS) has taken place, following extensive preparation by our Buildings and Grounds team. We are now working collaboratively with our environmental consultants and other stakeholders to review findings, determine appropriate next steps for minor mitigation, and coordinate follow-up testing. We appreciate the tremendous work that has gone into this project and remain committed to keeping staff and families informed as the process continues.

We are also addressing several ongoing facility maintenance challenges, including aging roofs and increasing roofing repair and replacement needs across the district. Our team continues to assess roof conditions, respond to immediate concerns, and evaluate longer-term solutions. These needs highlight the challenges of maintaining aging facilities while balancing available resources and other district priorities. We continue to prioritize immediate needs while working toward sustainable, long-term facility solutions.

Enrollment and District Planning

Our October 1 K–12 enrollment count was 4,858 students, approximately 120 above the enrollment projection used in developing the FY27 budget. We are reviewing these numbers and their potential financial implications as we continue monitoring enrollment, staffing, and resource needs.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Homecoming and the Bluejacket Education Foundation's Future Fest provided wonderful opportunities to connect with families, community members, and local organizations. We also continue working with community partners on initiatives supporting student well-being, mentorship, and expanded opportunities for students.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming weeks, our focus will include continuing the finance leadership transition, advancing facilities work, supporting the implementation of our Strategic Plan, and preparing for important year-end financial activities, including the final audit, Truth in Taxation, and final levy certification in December.