Menahga Principal's Board Report

Steph Mercil and Michelle Koch

November, 2026



Rylie Wirley reading her winning essay At Veteran's Day program



ELA resource review team Nov 13th

Elementary School Update

November is flying by with many fun and exciting activities and partnerships with the community.

Cardboard Challenge: *Menahga 5th grade welcome Verndale 5th grade students for a cardboard arcade game fun event. Thanks to Chris Lake for organizing this fun and engaging event!*

Veteran's Day Program: *We were truly honored to take part in this special event, with our elementary students serving as flag carriers and showcasing their artwork throughout the school to express our patriotism and gratitude for those who have served and continue to serve our country. Mr. Besonen read the story and meaning of The White Table, Mrs. Redetzke's 1st grade class led the pledge allegiance and the 5th grade choir sang beautifully in another amazing Veteran's Day program.*

Parent/Teacher Conferences: *We were pleased with the strong family turnout and enjoyed sharing updates on student progress over the first quarter of the school year. We are grateful for the ongoing partnerships with our families, which help make our school a safe, engaging, and joyful place for learning.*
We had approximately 91% of parents in attendance!

Staff Development Nov 13: *We had a great day of learning for staff with a session from William Grube Education on using AI. Staff learned many new resources that can help in their work each day. Our ELA continued working on applying a rubric to another ELA resource, Nov 23 or 30 the team plans to review another resource in search of the best resources that will help our teachers apply the MN state standards that includes the science of reading, a mix of non-fiction and fiction texts, engaging stories and user friendly for teachers. Our district PBIS team meet together to check in our our goal list created this summer with our PBIS*

coach. Goal areas include continuing to align our behavior matrix to our IC entry, reviewing and analyzing behavior data as a team and with staff, and introducing a school - wide positive behavior system.

Career Pathways Week: *Elementary students were invited to take part in Career Pathways learning opportunities during the High School's special week. Classroom teachers were given the chance to sign up for a variety of events designed to spark curiosity and help students begin thinking about their future interests and possibilities.*



Kindergarten student creating an electrical circuit

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!

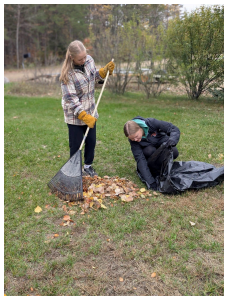
Seeing Success*: The Second half of the First Semester is up and running. Students are engaged and working hard. The 7th and 8th grade second quarter is rolling. We are working on 7th and 8th grade honor roll. Baileigh continues to do an amazing job with balancing classes, honoring requests from students 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 has met with all 9-12 students to schedule out their second semester!*

Conferences*: We were pleased with the family turnout at our 7-12 parent-teacher conferences! Grades 9-12 held approximately 130 conferences and several IEP meetings, while grades 7-8 held 142 conferences, along with IEP meetings and a 504 meeting. While we are pleased with these numbers, we always strive for greater family participation. Moving forward, we will continue conversations around making conferences more effective, efficient, and purposeful for parents, guardians, and teachers. We are grateful for our ongoing partnerships with families as we work together to support student growth and success.*

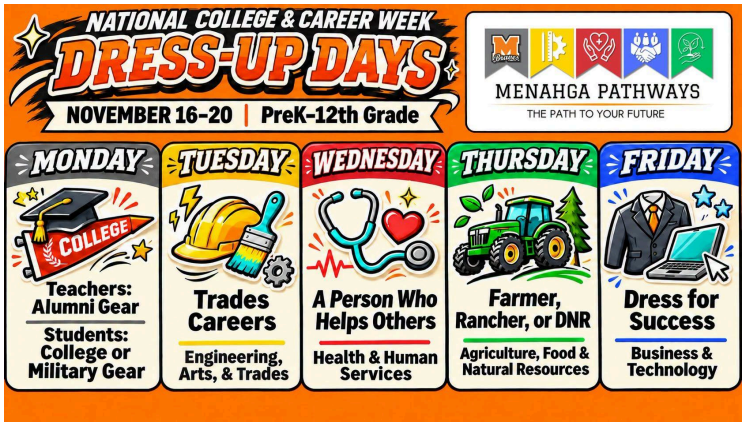
Gruvy Education - Student AI Learning: *As part of our ongoing partnership with Gruvy Education, students in grades 6-12 participated in AI education assemblies on November 19. These sessions focused on responsible and effective AI use, digital citizenship, and ways AI can enhance student learning. This opportunity supports our continued efforts to prepare students to navigate an ever-changing world of technology while building the skills necessary for future success.*

***Thank You NHS**: On Wednesday, October 14, the Menahga National Honor Society hosted its 2nd Annual Fall Cleanup, providing yard work assistance to four local families in our community! Students worked together to move and stack firewood, as well as rake and bag approximately 50 large, 50-gallon bags of leaves. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for students to build connections, strengthen teamwork, and give back to families in need. We are proud of our students for their hard work, generosity, and commitment to serving our community. We are honored to make a positive difference in the lives of others and look forward to continuing this meaningful tradition! Also, congratulations to our new NHS inductees. (Mr. Hedstrom's Report).*

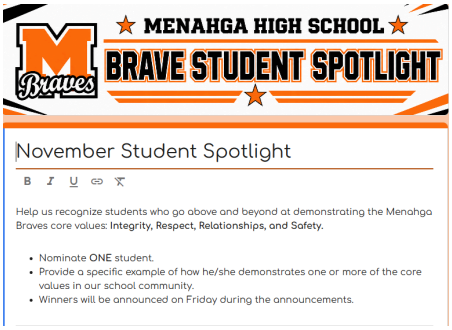




***Career Pathways:** Menahga Schools celebrated College & Career Readiness Week, November 16-20! Our Career Pathways Team planned an exciting week of district-wide activities that engaged students of all grade levels. Highlights included daily dress-up days and photo booths, Career Pathway Posters, Career Passports, Design Studios, Lake Water Investigations for our 7th and 8th graders, and our annual Menahga Mall and Shark Tank experiences. A special thank you to Astera Health and our CNA/EMT class for providing hands-on opportunities to explore healthcare careers. Throughout the week, students explored career opportunities, discovered new interests, and learned about postsecondary options. Thank you to our Career Pathways Team, staff, and community partners for making this such a meaningful and memorable experience for 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. Starting the end of November the high school will bring on…*

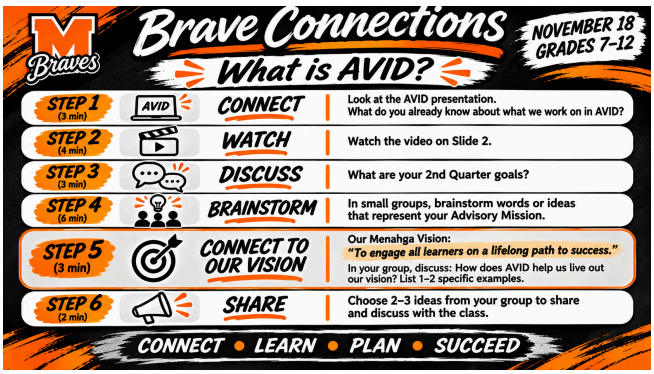


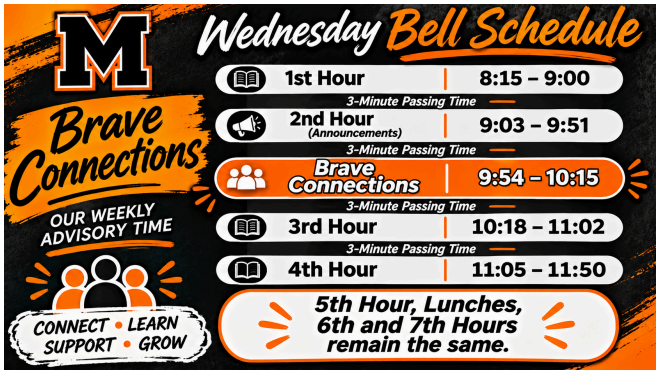
Thank You: *In celebration of our November Attitude of Gratitude, our 9-12 Student Council is planning a Great Gratitude Week, November 16-25. Activities include themed spirit days, daily Gratitude Spotlights during morning announcements, and Gratitude Chains throughout the building. Students and staff are encouraged to recognize and celebrate those who positively impact their lives. We appreciate our Student Council's leadership in creating opportunities to strengthen relationships, promote positivity, and continue building a supportive school community.*

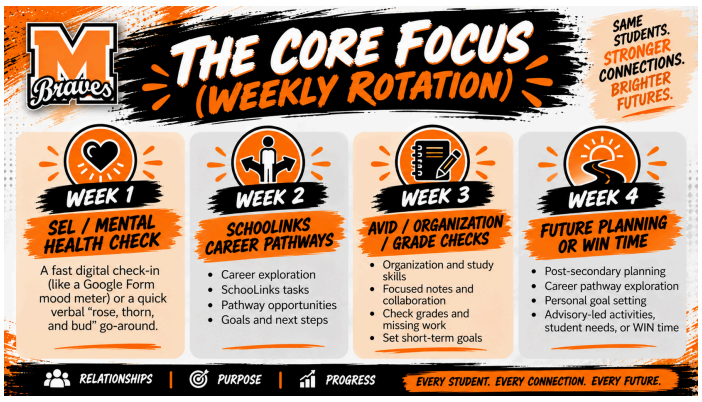
4th Annual Big Buck and Big Doe: *We have 8 entries! Thanks to Smokey Hills Outdoor Store and D. Rinke Farms for sponsoring! Winners will be announced Monday (Nov. 23) am.*



7-12 Advisory Time: *Our first Wednesday Advisory (Brave Connections) went great. Our focus was on connecting the Brave Connections to our Strategic Plan, building expectations and peer connections, and continuing to build our knowledge of AVID. Our next Brave Connections will be Dec. 2nd. 9:50-10:15 am. You are welcome to stop in anytime!*







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 *a*nd Michelle Koch