



Independent School Dist. No. 857
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Gwen Carman, Superintendent
Cory Hanson, High School Principal • Dave Riebel, Elementary/Intermediate Principal

Superintendent's Report to the School Board
Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman
October 11, 2021

Meeting Agenda Item Notes

Audit Presentation Craig Popenhagen and Luke Greden from CliftonLarsonAllenLLP will be at the meeting to present the findings of our FY21 Audit. They plan to present in person but are presenting at another district's meeting prior to ours. They are estimating they will get here @ 6:45pm but we may need to adjust the meeting agenda accordingly.

Thank you to Teresa Grossell and John-Mark Dundas for their work with the Auditors. This is a very long and detailed process that has taken over 3 months to complete. This audit was particularly time consuming because the auditors were required to look in depth at some of the federal funds we received and assuring that we spent them appropriately with the appropriate documentation.

Vickie Speltz Request to Be on National School Nutrition Association Ballot It is unique and positive for a staff member and our district, to have a staff member wanting to serve on a National Board in the area of their profession. As you know, Vickie has worked in our district for 25 years – many of them as both a bus driver and Food Service Director. Vickie has served on the MN School Nutrition Association for several years and was recently nominated to apply to be on the ballot to serve on the National School Nutrition Association Board. Vickie is particularly passionate about the role she can serve as an advocate with legislators on issues relevant to school nutrition programs. If elected, it would be a two-year term, and she would need to be out of the district 10-15 days annually (some of them in the summer). All expenses associated with travel would be paid for by the Association.

If elected, Vickie is requesting that any days she is out of the district because of her National Board duties, be considered Professional Development, and therefore, she would be compensated at her regular rate of pay. The additional expense for the district would be a substitute bus driver and possibly a substitute for food service (depending on the food service staffing at the time).

I recommend we support Ms. Speltz in this request.

Informational Presentation by Melanie Tatge, Winona County Public Health Supervisor Ms. Tatge has been a pillar of information and guidance for area school district COVID team members since the pandemic began. For much of the past year she has led weekly remote meetings with local data, updates and resources and to enable us to exchange information and ideas between Winona County schools as well as with area health agencies. When

Toby, Bree and I met on Tuesday, we agreed it would be valuable to have her answer questions from Board members. Please let me know specific questions or topics you would like her to address or bring them to the meeting.

OTHER UPDATES

Educational Equity Is Giving All Students a World Class Education Attached to my report are two documents that provide important statements regarding public education’s role and responsibility to assure all students thrive and reach their greatest potential.

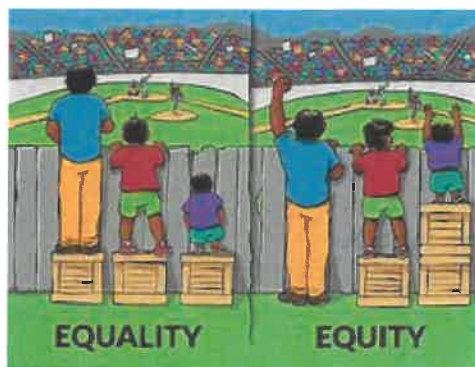
One document is extremely powerful and unique in that it is jointly endorsed by:

- Education Minnesota
- MN Association of School Administrators
- MN School Board Association
- Association of Metropolitan School Districts
- MN Association for Special Education
- MN Elementary School Principals Association
- MN Association of Secondary School Principals
- MN Association of School Business Officials

The second document is an Equity Statement developed by the MN Association of School Administrators.

It is important the Board members (and all school staff and parents) fully understand and embrace the meaning and significance of true Educational Equity. “All Means All” is not a new concept but it is one that can be difficult to fully implement and is too easily overlooked. The most recent emphasis on equity has been prompted by attempts to misrepresent our equity work being mistaken for “critical race theory”. CRT is a higher education theory that suggests some must lose opportunities in order for others to succeed.

Educational Equity is another fundamental reason why the curriculum work that teachers and administrators are doing this year is so important.



Veteran’s Day Program Please mark your calendars for the Community Veteran’s Day Program in the High School Gym on Thursday, November 11th at 11:00am. Thank you to Mr. Ethan Scheck for organizing this important program for our local Veterans and our communities. Veterans and their families will be treated to cookies and coffee at 10:30am prior to the program.

Safe Learning Plan: During my report at the meeting, I will provide an update on our Safe Learning Plan with the recent modification to require students in grades 7-12 to wear a mask/face covering during the school day in the building.

The MSBA Conference will be held January 13-14th at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Let Gwen know if you would like to attend. There is no registration fee.

Thank You!

- Thank you to the Lewiston Lions are providing chicken meals to our high school student athletes as part of their fund raiser on October 8th.
- Thank you to the Rotary Club of Winona for donating dictionaries to our 3rd graders.
- Thank you to all of the staff involved in planning and supporting the spirit of Homecoming Week. This has been my first 'complete' Homecoming Week in L-A and it is so great to see the enthusiasm and so many traditions!



Contact

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Public school leaders pledge to support and expand education equity programs intended to make schools more safe, welcoming and effective for all students

ST. PAUL, Minn. Sept. 13, 2021 – The leaders of some of the most prominent groups in public education, representing school boards, superintendents, administrators, school business officials, principals, special education administrators, teachers and other educators from across the state, have issued a joint statement in support of increasing education equity, including in race and gender.

Nearly all Minnesotans agree every student deserves an education that encourages them to understand and value who they are and where they came from so they can reach their full potential, no matter their skin color, background, gender, or ZIP code.

Too often, we have fallen short of this goal, especially for our students of color, LGBTQ+ students, students living in poverty, and students with special physical or emotional needs. We are committed to reversing this trend with programs and policies that meet students where they are — academically, emotionally, and physically — and lift them up so every student has an excellent chance at academic success. For us, this is the definition of education equity.

We have seen progress but have no doubts that more needs to be done to make our schools safe, welcoming and effective for all students. If nothing else, demography demands we quicken our pace. More than a third of our students statewide are students of color and our state becomes more racially and culturally diverse every year.

Unfortunately, many communities throughout Minnesota are feeling the effects of a well-organized national campaign pushing an agenda that misrepresents the vital work of racial and gender equity in our schools and then mislabels it as “critical race theory.” This deceptive campaign pushes the idea that educational equity is a zero-sum proposition — that it is necessary for some students to lose opportunities to help other students succeed. Nothing could be further from the truth. Educational equity is giving all students a world-class education.

To be clear: Every student — white, Black, brown, or Indigenous — benefits from learning a deeper respect and understanding for their neighbors through an honest education in social studies, language arts, and all the other subjects taught in our schools.

As representatives of classroom educators, administrators, and school boards throughout Minnesota, we value students for who they are today and our organizations are committed to developing all of them into informed citizens, good neighbors and critical thinkers who can live in, and someday lead in, a multicultural, multiracial Minnesota. Our kids deserve nothing less.”





Equity Statement:

It is MASA's responsibility to prioritize and allocate the resources necessary for each learner to thrive and reach their greatest potential in any Minnesota public educational institution or system. We fervently believe that every student deserves an educational experience grounded in high expectations that is free from bias, prejudice, and discrimination. In our roles, we must continue to lead the work of removing barriers so that every student has access to a high quality, rigorous education to fully prepare them for whatever path they choose.

Definitions

Educational Equity - Educational practices, policies, and procedures that support academic fairness, inclusion, achievement, and opportunities to ensure that every child has access to resources, educators, and support they need to be successful.

Race Equity - Educational practices, policies, and procedures within a system or entity that focus on implementing equitable approaches to eradicate the overt and covert systems of power and privilege that have historically had significant adverse effects and impacts on populations of color. This includes the intentional shifting of policies, practices, attitudes, mindsets, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes based on race.

MASA Belief Statements:

- MASA believes public education is a cornerstone of American democracy.
- MASA believes it is the responsibility of the Association to actively support school leaders as they ensure equity in order to improve student outcomes for every student.
- MASA believes leaders must continuously improve their practices to ensure all students receive a "World Class Education."
- MASA believes a commitment to racial equity by the organization and its members is essential for the success of every student.
- MASA believes equity is a lens through which all decisions should be made.