



# PIPESTONE AREA SCHOOLS District No. 2689

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## School Board Superintendent Report March 19, 2025

Well, March has lived up to the hype of being unpredictable with the weather. Nonetheless, we have continued our progress in the Pipestone Area Schools. Here are a few items of note for the board as we set our eyes to April.

1. Budget – There is still uncertainty with the budget for next year. We will not know the exact outcome of policy decisions on school finance until May or maybe even June. Our team is working through this uncertainty and planning the best we can. This will include some staffing decisions. We have included an action item on budget parameters for the 2026 fiscal year.
2. Roofing Pre-construction Meeting – Tremco held a preconstruction meeting on March 18. We had representatives from Blackhawk Roofing as well as their subcontractor handling the façade needs in the project. Some of the façade work will begin in April over the library area. There will be a great deal of rock taken from the roof that we will stockpile for use on the district campus or to sell to interested parties. The contractors will begin moving in equipment and storage containers at the end of April. Overall, it was a very good meeting and I believe we have very responsible and responsive contractors on the project. I will share information with the board and the community as we receive updates from Tremco throughout the project.
3. Focus Groups – On March 19, Knowledge Works is leading student and staff focus groups to gain input on our Portrait of a Graduate. At the time of drafting this, we have not conducted the special community meeting to discuss the Portrait of a Graduate work which will occur on March 20. I am very excited for this work and believe we need to really consider how our district and system can be more student-centered in the teaching and learning process. Here is a video link that provides perspective about a student-centered instructional model. [IFR Video - Student Centered Learning](#)
4. Calendar Development – Our calendar committee worked to create a revised 2025-26 calendar and a proposed 2026-27 calendar. These calendars reflect a commitment to balance breaks, educational opportunities, quarters and semester breaks as much as possible.
5. Legislative Updates – Here are a few legislative updates that are coming from St. Paul. Recently, Democrat David Gottfried won the 40B special election, creating a 67-67 tie in the Minnesota House. This means the House will revert to the power-sharing agreement agreed to earlier in the session. As previously agreed, Representative Lisa Demuth will continue as Speaker of the House. House committees will now have co-chairs, Republican and DFL, and equal party representation on all committees—except the newly formed Fraud Committee, which remains under Republican control. Moving forward bills will not pass out of committee without bipartisan support. Additionally, passing a bill on the House floor requires 68 votes, making bipartisan cooperation essential for any legislation to advance from the House. The House was set to take up HF11, a bill proposing a one-year extension of the paid leave law's implementation. However, during that floor session, Rep. Baker tabled the bill, expressing hope that this move would allow more time for discussion and potential compromises on proposed changes.

*"Inspire life-long learners. Build Character. Prepare them for their future."*

#### a. Committee Hearing Updates

##### *Senate Education Policy*

Last week the committee heard the [bill](#) to replace the MCAs with a nationally recognized college entrance exam, the bill [directing the MDE commissioner](#) to amend the state accountability plan to exclude opt-out students from MCA reporting, and the [bill](#) to allow schools to begin before Labor Day in 2026 and 2027.

##### *Senate Education Finance*

The committee reviewed bills addressing school funding and facilities. [SF1198](#) would allow roof projects under the long-term facilities maintenance program, [SF1197](#) establishes seasonal tax base replacement aid, [SF1460](#) would allow school boards to renew capital project referendums without voter approval, [SF2244](#) increases referendum levy equalizing factors, and [SF1275](#) proposes to tie extended time revenue to increases in the basic formula allowance. Lastly, the committee heard [SF1457](#) which mandates districts to adopt cardiac emergency response plans, adds new training requirements, and directs that AEDs be placed in schools and athletic venues.

##### *House Education Policy*

The committee heard [legislation](#) that extends the short-call substitute teacher pilot program and changes the daily rate of pay requirements, a bill to [allow](#) districts to access personnel files of prospective teachers from their employing districts, the [PELSB](#) policy bill, and a [bill](#) requiring legislators to spend 12 hours a biennium observing a teacher or administrator. Lastly, the committee heard two bills to allow more flexibility for school districts - [HF1435](#) provides more flexibility for innovation zones and P-TECH schools and [HF1607](#) expands the types of experiences that districts may count toward the minimum hours of instruction for secondary school students.

##### *House Education Finance*

The committee received an [overview](#) of programs to increase the teacher workforce and heard the bill to establish a [statewide teacher apprenticeship program](#). The committee also heard overviews on the [K12 budget forecast](#), [compensatory revenue](#), and the [per-pupil formula](#).

#### **Miscellaneous committee hearings**

The Senate State and Local Government committee heard [SF787](#), expanding the open meeting law to allow unlimited remote board member participation.

The House Judiciary Committee heard [HF101](#), which clarifies what directory information is to be kept private but allows an exception permitting school districts the option to share directory information with referendum campaign committees.

6. Tentative Agreement – I believe we have reached a tentative agreement with the ESP group. We are finalizing the language and the group will present the information to their membership for consideration.
7. Culture Survey Results – As I shared previously, we conducted a brief internal culture survey for the district staff. From the results, we identified two strengths and two opportunities for improvement. 98% of the staff member responded positively to “I understand how my role contributes to the success



of the Pipestone Area School District.” Also, 96.6% of staff responded positively to the statement, “I know what is expected of me in my role.” These are great results to support alignment in the district. However, in response to the statement, “I receive recognition or praise for doing good work regularly”, 78% responded positively. Additionally, when asked to respond to this statement: “There is someone at work who encourages my professional development”, 88.6% responded positively. The administrators will be working with staff leadership teams and among the administrative team to create some formalized recognition opportunities in the district. Additionally, we will be developing some strategies to promote professional and personal development among staff members. I am intending to do a comprehensive survey, much like the district did two years ago, at the conclusion of the school year.

8. Food Service – I will be reviewing some additional options with Taher to utilize our food service fund balance. I believe some of the initial efforts to provide more options for students has been well received. We will continue to consider options both in terms of the food quality as well as food choice options. I appreciate the willingness of Taher to partner with us on solutions that will better serve our students in the Child Nutrition Program.
9. Communication Efforts – I continue to work on communications throughout the district. I appreciate the opportunity each week to conduct a radio show with Christensen Broadcasting and provide an article in the newspaper. Each month I also provide an update to the staff through an internal communication – Quiver Quips. These efforts are a way to keep our community and team informed about the events and work of Pipestone Area Schools.
10. Survey – We will be conducting a survey with Knowledge Works to gather additional information for our Portrait of a Graduate. Watch for these details to come.
11. Chamber Event and Outstanding Educator Recognition – The Chamber held their annual awards event on Friday, March 14. I was delighted to attend with Mrs. Moravetz. It was particularly exciting as this is the first year the Chamber recognized an Outstanding Educator. Nancy Siebenahler attended and really did not realize she was the first recipient of this recognition by the Chamber. Mrs. Moravetz did an excellent job sharing a few words why Mrs. Siebenahler was so deserving of this special recognition. Congratulations to Nancy for her contributions to the Pipestone Area Schools and the broader community!
12. Legislative Testimony – I have been invited to provide some testimony on potential legislation. The bill is House File 1607 and address “hours of instruction”. The bill would essentially allow for extended learning opportunities beyond the school for student experiences and instruction beyond the regular student contact day. The bill defines the term “hours of instruction” for secondary school as educational experiences that allow students to earn academic credit, that are available to all students, and that are supervised, coordinated, and verified by a qualified teacher. This could include experiences through the 4-H program, through other work-based programs, and related internship or apprenticeship programs. The legislation would acknowledge and recognize additional educational opportunities for students that exists beyond the regular school day. This is an exciting piece of legislation as we consider how we can maximize educational experiences and opportunities for students.