



Independent School Dist. No. 857
100 County Road 25
Lewiston, MN 55952
(507) 523-2191

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
January 10, 2022

Meeting Agenda Item Notes

Bids for Stadium Lights As you know, one of the stadium lights shut off during the October 20th football game. While we had all of the light bulbs replaced this summer, the light poles on the field are 40 years old and much of the coating on the electrical wires has decayed. As the weather was wet and windy that evening, it appears the wires came in contact with the bulb fixture and blew the fuse. While we can 'repair' the lights in that pole, it appears that without replacing the wiring we are only putting a 'band aid' on the situation. In addition, we have 3 additional poles in a similar condition and at risk of having the same situation repeat itself.

As discussed at the last Board meeting, I did solicit bids to replace the 4 poles. We have an approximate \$600,000 fund balance that can only be used for Construction related projects. The bids were due January 5th and I will have an overview of the process and a recommendation for you at the meeting.

Also at the our last meeting, the option to keep the existing bulbs and only replace the electrical wiring was discussed. Unfortunately, after further research, this is an option that I am not recommending because of the significant cost and still leaving us vulnerable to repeated incidents of outages.

Community Survey Attached to the agenda packet is the School Perceptions survey I am recommending be distributed to district residents, parents and staff. We will have the results late February. This should provide us important data for future planning.

Conversation with the Altura City Council I have reached out to Altura Mayor John Mask, Council Member Bob Schell and asked them to encourage the rest of the Council to be at the meeting for an informal discussion as part of the Board agenda. T

Policy 419 Adoption To achieve compliance with the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Emergency Temporary Standard and Minnesota OSHA's recent adoption of the ETS, the Board must take action to adopt Policy 491 Vaccination or Testing and Face Coverings.

On January 3rd, MNOSHA adopted the Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) by reference. The ETS was effective in Minnesota as of January 3, 2022. MNOSHA has stated it will not issue citations for noncompliance with any requirements of the ETS before January 10, 2022 and will not issue citations for noncompliance with the standard's testing requirements before February 9, 2022, as long as an employer is exercising reasonable, good faith efforts to come into compliance with the standard.

Per the ETS, we are required to share the following information with staff. This will be done via email and posted on our webpage:

- [Notice of the ETS Regulations](#)
- [CDC Document-"Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines"](#)
- [Warning About the Possible Criminal Penalties for Providing False Information](#)
- [Vaccination Medical Accommodation Request Form](#)
- [Vaccination Religious Accommodation Request Form](#)

For your reference: **Policy 203, Section IV (b):** *In the case of an emergency, a new or modified policy may be adopted by a majority vote of a quorum of the school board. A statement regarding the emergency and the need for immediate adoption of the policy shall be included in the minutes. The emergency policy shall expire within one year following the emergency action unless the policy adoption procedure stated above is followed and the policy is reaffirmed. The school board shall have discretion to determine what constitutes an emergency situation.*

Approval of this policy is contingent upon the U.S. Supreme Court upholding President Biden’s Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) which is the basis for Policy 491. If the ETS is overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, Policy 491 will immediately be withdrawn and no longer effective, without the need for further school board action.

OTHER UPDATES

January 10th Meeting with Staff With the late start on January 10th, I am having an all staff meeting. My topics will include updates on our Strategic Planning focuses and COVID related information. I plan to review in some detail the curriculum review processes, enrollment data and anticipated needs for budget reductions next year. It will be at 7:45am in the HS Gym if you would like to attend.

Pandemic Updates: We have experienced a significant number of positive cases since the Holiday Break. Staff is the group that has had the most impact, and this has created staffing shortages amongst our custodial staff, bus drivers, teachers and paraprofessionals. Each of these groups has very limited substitute availability. Thank you to the principals and the entire staff for their patience and flexibility because staff absences impact co-workers as well as students.

I recommend no changes to our current requirements for students and staff to wear face coverings during the school day. This is important in light of our current case rate, and also in regards to the potential for the OSHA ETS Standards to take effect, as well as the most recent CDC modifications to quarantine and isolation timelines. We are awaiting MDH to provide their guidance for PK-12 Schools in regards to the CDC guidelines. However, both the OSHA ETS and the CDC guidelines have masking requirements under certain circumstances. I continue to firmly believe we are safer and able to be more consistent by having all wear masks vs needing to track and enforce ‘who’ should be wearing one. In addition, not having staff and students mask during the school day would likely increase absences due to spread as well as close contact quarantines.

This is a situation we will continue to monitor closely.

2022-23 Academic Calendar The school year calendar is developed with input from a Calendar Committee that includes teachers and administrators. Often the entire staff is surveyed on 2 or 3 options that may vary on school breaks, etc. Ultimately a recommended calendar is then recommended to the Board for approval.

For 2022-23, I recommend we make a few fundamental changes to our traditional calendar model.

I would like to:

- Eliminate the current '2- hour late starts' on the calendar
- Increase the number of full days of non-student days/teacher workdays by 5

This would result in 5 fewer student contact days – but this does not include the increase of 18 hour of instructional time by eliminating the late starts.

I am recommending we increase the number of full days for teachers and administration to do important work to support students – PLCs, curriculum development and other staff development needs. I would like to schedule most of these days to happen on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday to lessen the likelihood of these days being used for pre-planned absences adjacent to a weekend by teachers, or by students for 'longer weekends.' As you may recall, several districts have utilized Wednesdays for staff only days. By alternating which days of the week, the decrease in preschool students' contact days is spread out across the different class sections.

This calendar change would still provide 6 'extra' days to keep us within the State's minimal requirement for number of student contact days. I recommend we continue to 'make up' four or more 'snow days' or other emergency cancelations.

As we have budget discussions, we can discuss options on how this calendar change would impact our support staff groups.

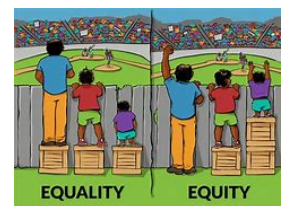
I am looking for Board approval by consensus to pursue this calendar model change. Either way, I will work with the Calendar Committee to develop a specific calendar for your consideration at the February Board Meeting.

THANK YOU

Thank you so to Principal Riebel, Principal Hanson, Transportation Supervisor Kevin Ziebell, Facilities and Ground Director Joe Banicki, Food Service Director Vickie Speltz and Assistant Director Lori LaBrec for all their flexibility and professionalism to 'do what needs to be done' to keep things operating efficiently even with high numbers of staff absences. Each of these supervisors are 'stepping in' and doing more daily work that is typically done by other staff while also maintaining their primary responsibilities. Thank you to many other staff members for also being flexible, taking on extra work and doing what needs to be done to help assure students' needs are met!

Thank You to Jeff Oian, Ed MidWest Director, for his exemplary commitment to help assure our technology keeps working and all of his professional expertise. On the night of the significant wind storm and power outage in the City of Lewiston, Jeff drove through the storms 2+ hours and arrived at 1:30am to re-set our servers so our system was up and running the next day flawlessly! Thank you also to Jeff for working with me on an assessment of our printers/copiers to develop a short term needs/opportunities for savings and a longterm replacement cycle.

Thank you to Teresa Grossell, Business Manager, for her dedication and commitment to assuring our school finances are accurate and in compliance with required regulations. Special thanks to her for her recent work on our 2022 Pay Equity Report and our IRS Nondiscrimination Test which are both very detailed, time intensive reports and just two of many, many reports Teresa must complete for the district.



A reminder of the importance of considering equity in the work we do:

