



Independent School Dist. No. 857

100 County Road 25

Lewiston, MN 55952

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Gwen Carman, Superintendent

Cory Hanson, High School Principal • Dave Riebel, Elementary/Intermediate Principal

Lewiston - Altura Schools: Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community

Superintendent's Report to the School Board

Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman

March 13, 2023

Meeting Agenda Item Notes

Deb Marcotte, Executive Director Hiawatha Valley Education District Ms. Marcotte will be doing an informational presentation about the special education cooperative that our district belongs to. Special education services are very important and complex. The Cooperative enables us to share expenses with other districts for services that are specialized and that would be cost prohibitive and difficult for us to hire/deliver alone. In addition, the Cooperative provides our special education staff and administration support in assuring our IEPs and services are in compliance with the law, best practices and problem solving when there is a challenging situation. She will also be explaining HVED's need for a single site for services and administration and potential options.

2022-2023 School Year Calendar Modifications Due to the Large Number of Snow Days Attached to the agenda is a chart that explains and shows my recommendations for accommodating student days and compensation for staff. It is important to know that going under 165 student contact days is not an option per state laws.

Strategic Planning Framework: Attached is the agenda is a draft framework for a potential mission, vision, priorities and goals. This is the result of the most recent work session Bree, Cory, Dave and I had with Terry and Jeff. Thank you for your thoughtful input and discussions on January 22nd and February 16th. We will discuss this at the meeting. Hopefully, we can tentatively plan for approval at the April 10th meeting.

Teacher Non-Renewals and Placement on Unrequested Leave of Absence It is difficult to pass resolutions for teachers' contracts to not be renewed or reduced because this obviously directly impacts their lives. On the agenda are seven resolutions regarding teachers' positions in 2023-2024. One is a partial FTE reduction resulting from the closing of Altura. Two are for licensed teachers who are currently approved to teach with an 'Out of Field Placement' license and we are required to non-renew, and re-post their position (we will rehire these individuals if they are the most appropriate/most qualified applicant). Two are Tier I teachers and similarly, we must re-post their position and will re-hire if they are the most appropriate/most qualified applicant. Two are probationary and will not be rehired.

Facility Improvements and Operating Levy Increase Needs We had excellent discussions on March 1st with staff and the Facilities Task Force. The information shared on renovation options, cost estimates, property tax implications and the process of surveying our community was very informative. We are on track to continue this process, and continue to discuss the best option for our district, students and the community moving forward.

Monday, March 27th, 6:00pm: Working School Board meeting with InGensa and the Facilities Task Force.

Monday, April 3rd: School Tours, Meal and Community Engagement Meeting at the High School

- 4:30pm – Tour of the Elementary School (community invited)
- 5:15pm – Tour of the High School (community invited)
- 6:00pm – meal prepared by Vicky and Lori! (paid for by InGensa)
- 6:30pm – Presentation/Discussion in the cafeteria

OTHER UPDATES

Region 5 Computer Services This important organization provides reporting and SMART (our financial software system) application support services to school districts throughout south central and southeastern MN. As I now serve on the Board of Directors as a superintendent representative, I participated in interviews to replace Darin Jensen, the Executive Director, who resigned to move on to a different organization. Ultimately, the decision was made to hire Jill Guhlke to be an Interim Director for one year. Jill has worked for Region V for many years and is highly respected by many. Jill didn't apply for the position for personal reasons, but we are very happy she has agreed to take on this interim role. We are hopeful that in a year the applicant pool will generate qualified candidates.

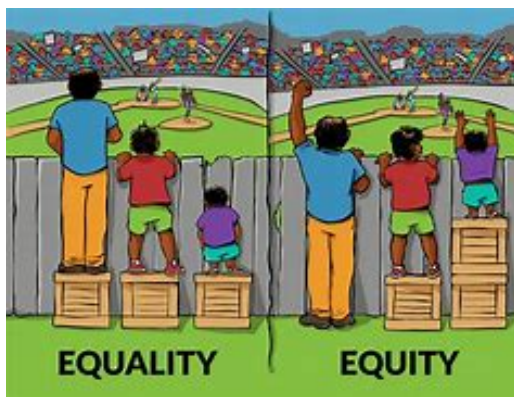
Early Childhood Programming Principal Riebel and I have been working with Vicky Greden and Kelli Loveless on 'reimagining' our early childhood programs next year. We want to lessen the 'silos' of 'daycare' vs 'preschool' and instead market that we provide quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programming all day – 6:00am - 5:30pm. We are offering parents a menu of options in terms of length of day and number of days they would like care/education for their children.

We are also making significant fee adjustments (lower) in order to be competitive with other local schools' early childhood programs. Ultimately, this will mean subsidizing these programs (offered under the Community Education umbrella – Fund 04) with General Fund 01 dollars. This practice is quite common in other school districts.

Increased funding for early childhood programs is a discussion in the legislature (and now also at the federal level), that potentially if approved would benefit us.

I feel strongly that this programming we must invest in as these programs enable us to provide essential quality programming for young children and will also help us develop positive relationships with families to help assure their enrollment in our kindergarten programs (and beyond). There are many details that will need to be worked out as registrations come in but we are excited!

Lewiston Chamber of Commerce If you are able, I encourage you to attend the meeting on Wednesday, March 15th at noon at the Rec Café. There will be a presentation from the City regarding the need for expanded EMS facilities. The need for my local housing and land for business development will also likely be discussed.



A reminder of the importance of considering equity in the work we do:
Every student deserves our best and what s/he needs to achieve.