Long Prairie-Grey Eagle Business Office – August 2026

Our office has reached the point in the year when we are working across three different fiscal years. For example, when I reconciled our bank accounts over the past couple of months, we were still receiving some "clean-up" payments from the Minnesota Department of Education for the 2024–2025 fiscal year. This is very typical, especially for special education. The state must wait until every school has entered its information into the tuition billing system before it can run the tuition billing process.

As I mentioned last month, we are also in the midst of preparing for the 2025–2026 audit. We are making sure all necessary information is uploaded and ready in time for the auditor's fieldwork.

Of course, the 2026–2027 school year is also ramping up as we prepare for back-to-school. Barb is making sure everyone who is new to our district is onboarded in a timely manner so they can hit the ground running on their first day. Bonnie is preparing the back-to-school Application for Educational Benefits for families to complete and return. As in prior years, it remains important for families to complete these forms because some areas of our funding are based on the number of students who qualify for free and reduced-price benefits.

Food service is also involved in the software transition to "Q" within the Skyward system. This has been quite a learning curve for our staff as they work to ensure all areas are accurate and reporting as they should. Jenny and Cindy have spent a significant amount of time this summer making sure all components of the new 2026–2027 contracts are accurately reflected in the payroll system. This includes not only salaries, but also insurance allotments, time-off balances, ESST hours, and other information within each staff member's payroll profile.

My summer has been spent wrapping up the 2025–2026 fiscal year and making sure all of our revenue and expenditures are recorded where they should be. This includes everything from billing our partner schools for their share of athletic program costs to reallocating general education aid revenue into the various funding categories for which it is designated.

This is also the time of year to finalize and report our Career and Technical Education expenditures to the state and to ensure our Special Education expenditures agree with the SEDRA (Special Education Data Reporting Application) numbers that Freshwater enters on our behalf. If those amounts do not agree, we are reimbursed based on the lower dollar amount reported. Needless to say, Dawn at Freshwater and I work closely to make sure everything balances perfectly!

Our insurance broker recently reached out and proposed that we put our health insurance coverage out for bid this year, as we have not done so for quite some time. We met with Steve Smith, our broker, along with LPGE staff representatives, and determined that we were interested in seeing what the market could offer us. We will review those bids over the next few weeks to determine whether there are opportunities to reduce health insurance costs for our staff.

As you all know, health insurance costs have become a significant consideration for everyone, and we are doing our part to secure the best rates and coverage we possibly can for our employees.

As always, please reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support of Long Prairie–Grey Eagle Schools.

Sherri Evenson