



Independent School Dist. No. 857
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Gwen Carman, Superintendent
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Lewiston - Altura Schools: Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community

Superintendent's Report to the School Board
Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman
February 13, 2023

Meeting Agenda Item Notes

2023-2024 School Year Calendar The principals, 5 teachers and I met twice to discuss calendar options for 2023-2024. We then surveyed staff on two options. This is a typical process, and usually the survey results are typically almost evenly divided, ie, approx. 50% want a spring break and get out 'later', and 50% do not want a spring break and get out 'sooner.'

This year, there was an option (the one I am recommending) that has the last teacher day being May 31st. This is earlier than when we can typically do, but it works because of the way the holidays fell, etc. 49 staff responded to the survey (40 licensed). 67% preferred this option, while 33% preferred a June 7th last day (more breaks).

This calendar incorporates a more extensive transition experience for the incoming 6th and 7th graders (Sept. 5th), as well as continuing the two day transition (individual conferences) for K-5 students/parents (Sept. 5th & 6th). It also continues to provide for 5 full days for teacher professional development – with one of the days being August 31st (a 4 day vs the traditional 3 day August workshop week for teachers).

A related topic is that MDE has an option for districts to apply for a 'flexible learning year' and have students start school prior to Labor Day. The principals informally surveyed teachers about this and there was widespread support for pursuing this. The process includes surveying parents and a public input process. I would like to know if the Board supports pursuing this for 2024-2025.

Safe Learning Plan We are required to have our "Safe Learning Plan" reviewed and take public comments on it every six months as part of receiving the pandemic funding. I am recommending no changes to our current plan.

Teacher Seniority List We are required to establish a Seniority List for teachers each year. This document must show each teacher's date of hire and their licensure area as this would be utilized if there are any Unrequested Leaves of Absences due to staffing reductions. The proposed Seniority List has been reviewed by EdMN/L-A and all of the teachers.

Resolution Directing Administration to Make Recommendations Regarding the Reduction and/or Discontinuance of Programs This resolution is made each winter and by virtually every school district. This resolution provides administration the 'permission' to recommend staffing or program reductions.

I am anticipating that at the March 13th meeting, I will have recommendations for a revised 2022-2023 budget and anticipated position/staffing changes for 2023-2024. These will include recommended adjustments that will result from the closing of the Altura School. The 2023-2024 budget will be approved in June 2023.

Strategic Planning Process: Thank you for your thoughtful input and discussions on January 22nd. Our next meeting will be February 16th. Jeff and Terry drafted documents from our 1st meeting that the “Thoughts Leaders” are reviewing. These will be shared at the meeting on the 16th.

Facility Improvements and Operating Levy Increase Needs The principals, Joe and I met with InGensa to discuss and review the draft facility plans from last summer, asked many questions, discussed possible plan modifications and a possible timeline IF we want to have a referendum vote in November 2023. Note that Operating Levy votes must happen on General Election Days.

To continue this progress and process, we have scheduled facility needs informational meetings for:

Wednesday, March 1st:

- 7:00am and 3:15pm: Optional meetings for staff
- 6:30pm – Facilities Task Force (and open to the community. Board members can also attend.)
 - IF there are Board members who would like to meet with InGensa during the day on March 1st, let me know and we can schedule a time.

Monday, March 27th, 6:00pm

- Working School Board meeting with InGensa to discuss facility plans and community survey questions/options

OTHER UPDATES

Math Score Data Information: Lewiston-Altura High School students are assessed in math three times per year utilizing the STAR Assessment Suite. STAR assessments provide standardized data to measure each student’s understanding of mathematical concepts based on the MN Standards for their grade level.

In September 2022, for the Math 9 (freshmen) students, 22 of the top 26 scores were from students who attended L-A in grades 6-8. Specifically, four students who attended a local non-public school in grades 6-8, scored 4th, 12th, 24th and 26th respectively.

In December 2022, Math 9 students, students who attended L-A in grades 6-8, had the seven highest scores on the STAR Assessment as compared to students who attended a local non-public school in grades 6-8.

In December 2022, Geometry students (Grade 10), students who attended L-A in grade 6-8, had 7 of the 9 highest scores as compared to students who attended a local non-public school in grades 6-8.

This data confirms that local non - public school students are generally strong math students, but they are not exceeding the skill level of the stronger students who have been in L-A for grades 6-8th.

This data is also a positive reflection on our math curriculum changes in the past 5 years. This data also reinforces the importance of continuing to support our teachers in assuring their instruction, assessments and grading practices are in alignment with the MN Standards.

City of Altura/Altura School and Grounds: The City of Altura has approved forming a committee to negotiate with our school district regarding the possible purchase of the Altura School and grounds. We are coordinating to have our mutual committees meet.

Thank You Kevin Ziebell! Thank you and congratulations to Transportation Supervisor Kevin Ziebell for doing everything that needed to be done so that all of our buses and vans passed DOT inspections on February 7th. This is on top of Kevin also frequently driving bus routes because we often need him to be a substitute driver. We can be very proud that our transportation fleet completed another successful inspection day! This is in no means a simple task as the

inspectors are extremely detailed. We need to have continued discussions about the need to replace vans that will be exceeding their time for transporting students (September 2023) and buses that will need replacement (we have one on order currently).

HVED Committee Work: My work with HVED (Hiawatha Valley Education District – our special education cooperative) has increased in recent weeks. I am part of a group who met individually with staff from the SAIL program (Level IV Behavior Disabled) to better understand the challenges and help identify possible recommendations.

I am also now one of two superintendents now on the Personnel Committee. My first meeting is February 8th (evening).

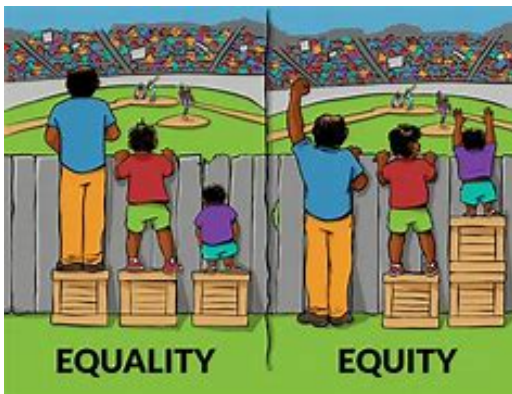
MSBA Negotiations Trainings: Sheala, Bree and I will be attending the training in St. Cloud on February 24th. David and Dave indicated their preference to attend the remote trainings. Let me now which you prefer so we can register you:

- Part A: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, February 28, 2023
- Part A: 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday, March 1, 2023

- Part B: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, 2023
- Part B: 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday, March 8, 2023

February 10th – Legislative Day (Kasson): I will have an update on this at the meeting.

March 20, 2023 MSBA/MASA Advocacy Day at the Capitol This year MASA (MN Association of School Administrators) is adding a day of advocacy at the capitol in collaboration with MSBA (MN School Board Association). Both organizations are inviting their members to meet at the Radisson Hotel, formerly the Best Western Capitol Ridge, at 8:00am on Monday, March 20, 2023. There will be a program at the hotel in the morning followed by lunch and then time for you to meet your local representatives and committee chairs in the afternoon at the state capitol. Please let me know if you would like to attend.



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.