



ADMINISTRATION REPORTS APRIL 2025

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & HUMAN RESOURCES

by: Shawn Kirkeide

Insurance Benefits – Open Enrollment Reminder

The Open Enrollment period for the July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 Benefits Plan Year begins Monday, April 21 and runs through Friday, May 2. This applies to full-time employees working 30+ hours per week. Eligible staff must either enroll in benefits or formally decline coverage. If you haven't already, you'll also need to designate beneficiaries for your life insurance.

Support Opportunities for Open Enrollment

Virtual Q&A Session

Date: Monday, April 21

Time: 1:00–3:00 PM

Details: Drop in any time during this window to ask questions and get help.

Link: [\[Meeting Link\]](#)

In-Person Open House

Date: Tuesday, April 22

Time: 3:00–6:00 PM

Location: ESC Community Room (Board Room)

Details: Stop by to meet with benefits counselors and view a short presentation.

New This Year: Benefits Buzz

To help staff better understand their options, the HR department introduced **Benefits Buzz**—a series of short online sessions featuring **HealthJoy, Aviben, and AFLAC**. Each session highlights the unique benefits and services offered by these providers. Recordings and additional resources will be available for those who were unable to attend the live sessions.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

by: Christopher Kampa, CFA

Finance

Moody's Investor Services has affirmed the district's Aa3 underlying credit rating following its most recent review. A credit rating, much like a personal credit score, serves as an independent assessment of financial health and strength. While we are pleased with the continued recognition of our fiscal stability, it is important to note that Moody's internal credit scorecard results suggest the district's performance aligns more closely with an Aa2 rating.

This discrepancy reflects a conservative approach by Moody's, despite the district's demonstrated progress. Since being downgraded in 2019 to an A2 rating with a negative outlook, the district has steadily strengthened its financial position. This progress has resulted in several upgrades in recent years, a direct result of strategic financial stewardship and improved operating results.

In the most recent evaluation, the district received AAA-level scores in several key areas, including fund and cash balances, year-end financial results, and prudent fiscal management. These are hallmarks of a well-run and financially responsible organization. The only areas in which the district did not score at the highest level were tied to the local economic profile—a limitation that reflects the size of our community rather than the district's performance or financial practices. As such, the model Moody's uses structurally prevents the district from reaching a full AAA rating.

When viewed in totality, the scorecard results clearly indicate that the district met the benchmarks for an Aa2 rating, which would place it among the most highly rated districts in the state. However, Moody's opted not to increase the rating, likely due to the number of upgrades already granted over the past several years. Credit rating agencies often balance rating adjustments with a desire to reflect stability in market perceptions, and too many upgrades in a short timeframe may run counter to that objective.

While we recognize the constraints of the rating process, the district's financial performance and creditworthiness remain strong. We will continue to prioritize long-term fiscal health, transparency, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Transportation

In April, the Transportation Department is focused on preparations for upcoming State Inspections. This process begins with an upcoming inservice dedicated to supporting drivers in thoroughly cleaning their buses and conducting detailed pre-trip inspections, which assist the maintenance team in identifying and addressing any mechanical concerns in advance. Additionally, with spring sports in full swing, the department is managing a high volume of trips and shuttles. School administrators are reminded that bus and driver availability is limited during route times—particularly between 8:30 AM and 1:00 PM—and many of these midday time slots are already booked.

Food Service

April has been a busy and productive month for the Food Service Department. We are pleased to congratulate Lisa Thompson on her promotion to a cook position at CIHS. At the high school, we invested in new laptops to support our "second chance" breakfast program, which operates from three hallway locations between first and second periods. This program continues to serve nearly half of the 500 daily breakfasts, ensuring access for students with varied schedules. Planning is also underway, in collaboration with the Buildings and Grounds team and external vendors, to replace the tray room dish machine at CPIS over the summer. The new unit will be more efficient, reducing water usage and eliminating the need for natural gas. Additionally, we are beginning early assessments for a potential upgrade to the aging walk-in cooler and freezer at CPIS. This month, we will reach a milestone of 600,000 meals served for the year, keeping us on track with last year's totals.

Building & Grounds

The Buildings and Grounds Department is planning necessary roof drain repairs at IPS, which will require minor asbestos removal as part of the preparation process. At IMS, additional maintenance is scheduled to address repairs needed on two exterior entrance doors. Meanwhile, the custodial team is

working to fill a few vacancies resulting from recent retirements, with interviews currently underway to ensure continued support and coverage across the district.

Technology

Over the past month, the technology department has made significant progress in its transition to Microsoft Intune for the co-management of users, devices, and applications alongside Windows System Center. This migration will enhance efficiency in managing inventory, user accounts, device imaging, software deployment, and security updates. Additionally, in anticipation of upcoming tariffs on international purchases, the department prioritized early procurement of necessary technology. This proactive approach is projected to save the district an estimated \$20,000 or more and will ensure timely delivery and preparation of devices for the 2025–26 school year.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

by: Christina Thayer Anderson

With Gratitude for Our Volunteers: Celebrating the Difference You Make

This Volunteer Appreciation Month, we are humbled and grateful to recognize and celebrate the more than 575 active volunteers who give so generously of their time, talents, and hearts to support Cambridge-Isanti Schools. Collectively, these dedicated individuals have donated nearly 5,000 hours to classroom support, student engagement, and district-wide initiatives—helping bring our mission to life every single day.

We are especially grateful for our three incredible Volunteer Coordinators, who play a vital role in meeting our goals and advancing our strategic plan. Through their efforts, they build strong and lasting relationships with staff, administrations, and volunteers, work tirelessly to connect students, staff, and families with essential resources, and provide coordinated support across our entire district—from Early Childhood to each school site and into Adult Basic Education.

In addition to those who donate their time, we also deeply appreciate our community members and partners who contribute financially or provide goods and services that strengthen our schools and programs. Whether you're sharing your time, your heart, your positive energy, or your resources—please know it all makes a difference. We simply could not do this work without you.

Recognizing our Early Learning Team and Afterschool Professionals

Additionally this month, we are proud to recognize two important celebrations: Week of the Young Child and Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week. While these are separate national recognitions, they share a common purpose—honoring the dedicated educators and staff who help shape the academic, social, and emotional foundation of our learners.

Our early learning educators—including those in early childhood, early childhood special education, and preschool—as well as our afterschool professionals, are essential to our district. High-quality early learning experiences lay the groundwork for lifelong success by fostering school readiness, curiosity, and a love of learning from the very beginning. Similarly, out-of-school time programs provide safe, enriching spaces where youth can explore interests, build friendships, and develop critical life skills beyond the classroom.

These teams not only nurture and teach our youngest Bluejackets, but also build strong, lasting relationships with families and caregivers—partnering with them through the earliest stages of their child's development and educational journey. From early mornings to afterschool hours, they offer

consistent, caring support that strengthens connections between home and school and upholds our mission to educate, empower, and inspire every student, every day *in partnership with our community*.

We are deeply grateful for the work these staff members do across our programs and schools. Their impact is both immediate and lasting, and we're proud to celebrate them this month.

TEACHING & LEARNING

by: Dr. Jason Bodey

Catalyst Training Update

This year, our district partnered with The Catalyst Approach to strengthen classroom culture and support effective behavior management through a three-part professional learning model. The training is grounded in applied research from over 50,000 classrooms and emphasizes connection and clarity. We leveraged 3 different parts to our training plan - 12 Foundational Skills, Coaching and Implementation Support, and Catalyst Live.

Part 1 – 12 Foundational Skills

All E–12 Licensed Staff and Instructional Assistants completed training in the 12 foundational behavior management strategies. These strategies help educators guide attention, reduce confusion, and support student success during lessons and independent work. Staff participated in this training either in the fall or during the February professional development day. The course provided real-world examples, time for reflection, and collaboration with peers. The focus remains on building strong relationships, increasing engagement, and creating more time for teaching.

Part 2 – Coaching and Implementation Support

Each school received multiple days of on-site coaching to support implementation of the strategies. Coaching options included:

- Classroom observations with immediate feedback
- Real-time support
- One-on-one consulting
- Data collection to guide next steps

Coaches provide practical, judgment-free support. Their focus is on empowering staff and reinforcing effective practices that work in real classrooms. This implementation support will continue next year to strengthen and sustain the use of the skills across all grade levels.

Part 3 – Catalyst Live

Catalyst Live gives staff the chance to observe the foundational skills in action. Small groups visit classrooms with high-level implementation and hear live narration from a coach through an earpiece. These visits include time for reflection and discussion. Each building had access to multiple Catalyst Live days, with up to eight staff participating per session. Live visits will continue next year to deepen understanding and inspire continued growth.

Looking Ahead

This summer, we will expand our work with The Catalyst Approach to design clear processes and supervision strategies for less structured areas of our schools—such as cafeterias, playgrounds, and

hallways. These efforts will support a consistent, proactive approach to behavior across all school settings. This comprehensive approach, made possible by the Non-Exclusionary Discipline (NED) Grant, is building a strong foundation for positive school climates, consistent practices, and improved student outcomes.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

by: Dr. Nate Rudolph

4.1 Community Facility Task Force

Our Community Facility Task Force continues to engage in thoughtful discussions about the long-term facility needs of Cambridge-Isanti Schools. The group of 59 community members have been busy reviewing building conditions, enrollment projections, and financial scenarios that will help guide future planning. Their input has been instrumental as we consider potential next steps to ensure our facilities meet the evolving needs of students, staff, and the broader community. We are looking forward to providing the School Board with a community proposed plan in the near future. Thank you to ALL who have been involved in this lengthy and in-depth process.

Bluejacket Education Foundation – Future Fest on April 25

We're also looking forward to this year's *Future Fest*, which will be held on Thursday, April 25. This annual event, hosted by the Bluejacket Education Foundation, raises funds to support innovative learning opportunities through their classroom grant cycles. It's always an inspiring evening that showcases the generosity and partnerships that define our Bluejacket community. Thank you to everyone involved in making this event possible.

Planning and Hiring for the 2025-26 School Year

Looking ahead to the next school year, our administrative teams are actively engaged in hiring, resource planning, and program development in accordance with our strategic plan. From recruiting talented staff to building master schedules and professional development plans, we are already focusing on ensuring a strong and student-centered start to the 2025-26 school year. Staffing conversations are taking place across all buildings, and we remain committed to hiring and retaining top talent.

Advocating at the Capitol

While the state legislature is in session, we continue to advocate on behalf of our schools and community. These conversations have focused on the real challenges facing districts like ours—particularly related to funding, flexibility, and mandates. I appreciate the time our elected officials have taken to listen and engage with the priorities of Cambridge-Isanti Schools. We will continue to represent our district's voice in these important policy discussions.