



# PIPESTONE AREA SCHOOLS

District No. 2689

Dr. Klint W. Willert, Superintendent  
Sonja Ortman, MS/HS Principal  
Jennifer Moravetz, Elementary Principal  
Len Burzynski, Maintenance Director  
Lisa Pease, Coordinator of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, and Continuous Improvement

Jacque Kennedy, Business Manager  
Rick Zollner, Activities Director  
Josh Stukel, Technology Director  
Kim Tuin, Food Service Director

April 22, 2025

It is looking more and more like spring. Activities are in full swing, field trips are planned, graduation invites are hitting mailboxes, and lawns are starting to turn green. As we look back on April and look ahead to May, here are a few items to share.

1. **Roof Construction** – The roofing project has started, albeit a bit earlier than expected. We currently have a crew completing some façade work in preparation for the roofers to come tear out the old roof and start with the new. We did have some complaints about the noise. We worked immediately with Tremco and the company to limit the noise and the times when the demolition work would occur. Roofing materials will start arriving in mid to late May and work will start immediately at the conclusion of the school year. You will see a brief update from Tremco included with my report.
2. **ESP Contracts** – We have completed the negotiations on the ESP contracts. I want to thank all of the team members who worked very hard to complete the process. Throughout the negotiations, we had some productive discussions and ultimately found mutual ground for agreement.
3. **KnowledgeWorks Update** – I will provide a brief update at the meeting on our progress and work with Knowledge Works. I am hoping to share information on the survey participation and the work occurring with the development of the Portrait of a Graduate.
4. **Legislature** – We are nearing the conclusion of the state legislature. The session has experienced a fair share of gridlock and debate on the vision of education in Minnesota. At this time, we do not have much clarity on what any changes might be coming for educational funding. There are a number of conflicts on the Governor's proposal and the vision that others hold for supporting and funding the public schools in Minnesota. I remain hopefully optimistic that in May I will have some more definitive items to report.
5. **Potential Conference Changes** – At a recent Big South meeting, two school districts have indicated they are considering a withdraw from the Big south Conference. The move by St. James and Blue Earth would occur in two years. The concern that has been expressed is the distances for Blue Earth and St. James to play Big South peers. Per the Big South Conference bylaws, a member school district needs to provide a two-year notice before they withdraw.
6. **United States Department of Education Impacts** – There continues to be a great deal of speculation circling on the ongoing discussion about the closure of the US Department of Education. At this time, there is not a great deal to report other than it appears significant changes are underway at the agency and we do not yet know what the impact of these changes will be to local school districts. For a district like Pipestone where we rely heavily on Title funding and support, these changes could be significant. Here is a link to a document from EducationCounsel, an organization associated with the American Association of School Administrators regarding

*"Inspire life-long learners. Build Character. Prepare them for their future."*

the Presidential Executive Order and the potential closure of the US Department of Education.

[EducationCounsel Alert: Executive Order on the Future of USED - 3.20.25](#)

7. **Favorite Educator Banquet** – The Favorite Educator Banquet occurred on April 16. It was another great event to recognize and celebrate the work of Pipestone Area School teachers and coaches. I want to provide a sincere Thank You to all of the teachers for making a positive impact on students. I also want to thank Dawn and Brian Schneider for their efforts and contributions to make this event possible.
8. **Transportation Contract Negotiations** – Following the board action tonight, the negotiations committee will need to work on the new contract negotiations for our district transportation services. I have alerted Ludolph bussing about the pending board action and subsequent need to negotiate a new contract.
9. **Teacher Appreciation Week** – The National Teacher Appreciation Week is scheduled for May 5-9, 2025 with National Teacher Day scheduled for May 6. This is a great time for our community to rally around our teachers and thank them for all they do for our kids and community.
10. **End of Year Activities** – There are a number of events and activities that occur as the school year draws to a close. I would encourage board members to watch for updates and information on the school website.

Overall, things are moving along quite well. I want to thank the board members for your service and commitment. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out at your convenience.