



# 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

## School Board Report – February 2026

Despite feeling a bit like spring, we are reminded by the calendar that we still have several weeks to go before we can truly say spring has arrived! In the meantime, I wanted to provide the board with a few items of note for the monthly school board report. As always, if you have questions, please let me know.

- Legislative Session Begins** – The Minnesota Legislature started the 2026 session on February 17 and is scheduled to adjourn on May 18. As always, education and education funding will be a topic of discussion at the legislature. We know that the current state budget appears to be stable, there are some long-term concerns that will have impacts on local school districts. I anticipate the legislature will take some actions to address those anticipated challenges in the next biennium to address the structural deficit in the 2028 and 2029 fiscal years where the state budget is projected to have a \$2.96 billion deficit. Here is a link to the December 4, 2025 Budget and Economic Forecast from the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget: [Budget and Economic Forecast / Minnesota Management and Budget \(MMB\)](#). Furthermore, here is a link to the Minnesota Legislative site where you can find information about the pieces of legislation working their way through the process at St. Paul: [Minnesota Legislature](#). MREA (Minnesota Rural Education Association) will provide regular updates to school leaders on legislative developments. The Southwest Minnesota region school superintendents are slated to be at St. Paul in early March. However, I will not be attending.
- Budget Preparation** – The district leadership and administrative team met last week to begin work on the budget and budget parameters. We are anticipating a 2.69% increase in state aid to schools for the fiscal year 2027. As we compile the parameters for board consideration, we are planning to be conservative and look for opportunities for savings and budget adjustments while still addressing the changing needs of the district. We will be meeting with the board Finance Committee in March to preview the parameters prior to the parameters being shared at the March meeting for full board consideration.
- What I Love About PAS** – This month, we launched a social media campaign titled, “What I Love about Pipestone Area Schools”. In my estimations, this has been a positive experience and culture building exercise to celebrate the many wonderful elements of PAS, including the staff, the programs and services, and the opportunities students have at the Pipestone Area Schools. I have truly enjoyed reading the various submissions and posts that have reminded us of the many ways people celebrate and support and love the Pipestone Area Schools!
- Quiver Quips** – I am continuing to provide staff members with a monthly internal staff communication titled “Quiver Quips”. I have received feedback that the additional communications have been appreciated. In the newsletter, I provide staff members with information on current topics including student-centered teaching and learning as well as the Portrait of a Graduate. I have also used the tool to provide information on school board action, policy information, and other education-related news

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

5. **Calendar Development** – It is time once again for the calendar committee to meet and review and finalize the preliminary 2026-27 calendar while also preparing the preliminary 2027-28 calendar. I envision we will complete this process in March and present the final 2026-27 calendar and the preliminary 2027-28 calendar for board consideration in March.
6. **Facilities Committee** – The board Facilities Committee met with district legal counsel to review the options we have regarding the failing flooring system in the new elementary school. Due to a number of circumstances, it has become evident the district will need to cover the costs to replace the failing system. More details will be shared by the committee members at the board meeting. Nonetheless, this is an expenditure we will start considering in our facility and operating capital expenditure plans.
7. **Student Career Fair** – Mrs. Ortman and I, along with Mrs. Dulas, have started conversations with the Pipestone Chamber and Pipestone EDA regarding a collaborative effort to provide a career fair for students. We are scheduling the event on a Friday so the following Saturday, it can be a community event. This will be held in the high school. The school event is scheduled for May 1 and the community event will be May 2. I am excited to see this come together as we create awareness among our youth regarding career pathway options right here in the region. I believe this ties in well with our Portrait of a Graduate and the expectations we have for PAS graduates. If you are interested in helping or participating or representing your business or place of work, please let Mrs. Ortman or Mrs. Dulas know.
8. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – The district is moving forward with an AI partnership with an organization called Flint AI. I was made aware of Flint during the participation in the Future of Educational Technology Conference. The Flint tool provides tools and resources to help engage students and personalize content and tutoring support to meet student needs. We are beginning with a small pilot group with the goal of fully implementation of Flint in the 2026-27 school year. I wanted to provide the board with a brief video to learn more about Flint and how the tool works to augment the teacher and support student learning: [Flint V3 — Demo Video \(March 2024\)](#).

That is all I have at this time. Remember, we are one day closer to spring!