



**Independent School Dist. No. 857**  
**100 County Road 25**  
**Lewiston, MN 55952**  
**(507) 523-2191**

*Gwen Carman, Superintendent*  
*Cory Hanson, High School Principal • Dave Riebel, Elementary/Intermediate Principal*

*Lewiston - Altura Schools: Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community*

**Superintendent's Report to the School Board**  
*Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman*  
*August 22, 2022*

**Meeting Agenda Item Notes**

**Safe Learning Plan** In order to receive the ESSER funds, we must continue to have a Safe Learning Plan that is reviewed by the Board every six months. Our recommended Plan is much simpler and shorter than previous ones. Of course, we all hope that COVID-19 will no longer be a significant factor in our processes, procedures and how we educate students!

**2022-23 Meal Prices** Breakfasts and lunches will no longer be available at no cost to students/families in 2022-2023. As you know, our food costs are rising. Our meal prices have not changed for 2.5 years. If there are no changes at the State or Federal level regarding food service funding, it is my and Food Service Director Vickie Speltz recommendations that we raise our prices.

<u>Current Prices</u>	<u>Proposed Prices</u>
PK-12 Breakfast: \$1.40	\$1.65
PK-4 Lunch: \$2.45	\$2.70
Gr. 5-12: \$2.70	\$2.95
Milk: \$0.50	No change.
Adults: \$3.80	\$4.95 (set by the State)

We will need to be very diligent and persistent in encouraging families to complete free/reduced priced meal applications. We are discussing more strategies on how to do this.

**School Bus Route Changes and a Pick Up/Drop Off at Winona Crossing Center** I have made arrangements with the owners of Winona Crossing Center to have a school bus pick up/drop off students. Thank you to Kevin Ziebell and Linda Leibfried for their work in downsizing one bus route and adding the bus stop in Winona. This will mean changes for some of our drivers and families, but no one will have an extra-ordinarily long route.

The downsizing of one route provides financial savings, reduces the need for one driver (we are short staffed), and the Winona stop may increase our enrollment. With the Board's approval to add this stop, I will get the

information out to the community. We know we will need to monitor/assess the new routes as we move forward. There are still a couple specific challenges but we will work to address them.

**Board Representative to Continuing Education Committee** It is required that our district maintain a Continuing Education Committee. On the Consent Agenda is a recommendation to designate Mari Jo Starks as our Coordinator (to replace a retiree, this is a Master Agreement position). We will also be re-establishing the state required committee that must have teachers, administration and a community member. Principal Riebel will be our administrator representative on the committee. The teachers will be selecting their representatives. It is my recommendation that a Board member serve as the community representative. Committee meeting times have not yet been set.

**Support Staff and Bus Driver/Van Driver Handbooks** As you may recall, these Handbooks were tabled in June to provide staff an opportunity to meet with Board representatives to discuss them. As you also know, what we would like to be able to pay them and what we can afford, are not the same. Thank you to them staff members who meet with some of us on August 10<sup>th</sup>. The discussions were respectful and important. After the meetings, Melissa Meisch, Sarah Sommer, Sheala Hall and I met to discuss the input and the Handbooks as proposed in June. We made a few revisions which you can see in the attached recommended Handbooks.

**Fuel Bids** We posted in the newspaper and mailed to two local distributors an opportunity to bid for our transportation fuels. We received one response – from High Plains Cooperative who has been providing our fuel for many years. Based on 8/15/22 rack prices, the costs per gallon are \$3.379 for unleaded gas, and \$4.251 for for diesel. This was a good process to assure we are receiving competitive prices, and how the price per gallon compares to retail vendors.

**Financial Reports** The financial reports are longer than typical because of the two week delay in our meeting schedule, and because of the start of the school year when we have more purchases. Thank you so much to Sheala Hall and Kara Prosen who are doing amazing work in mastering the complexities of school finance software and programs!

## **OTHER UPDATES**

**Back to School Celebration** Please let me know if you would like to sit at a Welcome Table, serve ice cream (30-minute shifts) or speak (short program). I am hoping we will have just a fun gathering for staff, parents, students and families!

**Back to School Workshops** Monday: August 29<sup>th</sup>: There will be a staff breakfast starting at 7:15am, introducing new staff at 7:45am and Welcome at 8:05am in the HS gym. Our schedule is tight due to a Cyber Security training, so my comments will be brief! 😊

**Facilities Task Force** We will have our 4<sup>th</sup> and final Task Force Meeting on Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00pm in the high school library. I would like to briefly discuss next steps/timeline at the Board meeting

**Altura and Lewiston City Council Meetings to Update on Our Planning** (Let me know if you would like to attend with me.)

Altura: Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at ???

Lewiston: Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm

**New Teacher Hires:** We know that we have more teachers than typical leaving the district and so like many, many districts in MN and the nation we are facing challenges in filling positions. I am told that in 1999, this district had a new superintendent, one new principal and 14 new teachers. Many of those ‘new’ teachers are still here!

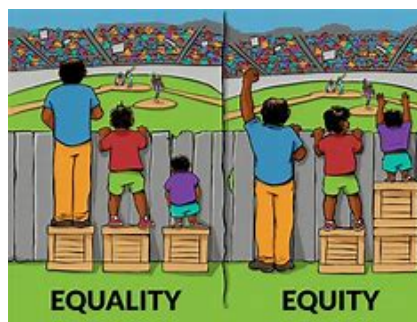
It is important to understand that the teachers who have left our district, are leaving for a variety of reasons and it is not necessarily indicative of ‘problems’ here. This is a challenge in most districts in our region, state and nation. Four teachers are leaving for neighboring districts, and those teachers already lived in those districts. Five teachers are leaving PK-12 public education. We had four teachers retire. I also want to assure everyone that Dr. Hanson and Principal Rieble have been extremely diligent in their interviewing and hiring quality replacements. Most of the teachers new to our district will come with teaching experience and/or life experience in their content areas. It is very important that our new teaching staff be supported and welcomed!

**School Board Candidates** It is very good that we have six community members who submitted their names to be on the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot for school board. Three candidates will be elected. Thank you to David Baer, Maria Baer, Holly Burt, Sara Daley, Daniel Kreidermacher and Jeffrey Nelson for their willingness to serve our school district in this important role.

## THANK YOU

**The New Year Begins!** Thank you to the custodians, office staff, and Dr. Hanson and Principal Riebel for all of their work this summer to assure we are ready for staff August 29<sup>th</sup> and students on September 6<sup>th</sup>. I especially want to recognize appreciation for Dr. Hanson for all that he has done to respond to the transitions in teaching positions at the high school level. This has required much time, non-traditional recruitment strategies and perseverance.

**Task Force Members:** Their work is not yet done, but thank you so much to the many staff and community members who have been meeting. I also greatly appreciate the detail and information from Jacqui, Rochelle and Luke from InGensa. These meetings have included more details about our financial challenges, our enrollment, and our facility needs with estimated costs. I have been so impressed with the diligence and heartfelt discussions. It is reassuring and exciting to see the depth of support for our students and the long term future of our school district!



**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.**