

Executive Director of Student Services
Board Update
February 2025

Collaboration: Working together to achieve more collectively.

- Social/emotional learning: The secondary social/emotional professional learning community led the full secondary team through some SEL activities during the last professional development day. They used break out sessions and worked in Google Classroom to align strategies and work collaboratively to develop deeper advisory activities for our students. The focus was to create a complete repertoire of online activities that can be accessed for all our staff through their classrooms and advisories.

Empathy: Considering and respecting the perspective and needs of member districts, students, families and staff.

- Intakes: From 12/19/24 through 1/19/25 (12 school days), ISD 917 has offered intakes to 14 students. This equates to ISD 917 offering intakes to 15% of the students on the waitlist of combined setting IV programs.

Intakes were offered to at least 14 students from seven (7) of nine member districts. (Randolph currently has zero students on the waitlist.) With the exception of South St. Paul which was not offered intake or placement during this period of time, every member district with students on the waitlist was offered placement for at least one (1) student.

Of the 14 intakes that have been offered from 12/19 through 1/19:

- 8 intakes have successfully been completed (57% of intakes offered have successfully been completed)
- Zero (0) families/districts outright declined intake for various reasons (0% of intakes offered were declined)
- There was one (1) student swap requested during this period
- There is one (1) intake that was offered more than 2 weeks ago that has yet to be scheduled due to ongoing delays outside of ISD 917's control
- Communication between ISD 917 and member district coordinators, ADs, and Directors resulting in waitlist/intake "movement" has been more prompt and decisive when compared to the previous reporting period

Finally, **11** new students physically began school in ISD 917 setting IV programs during the period of 12/19-1/19.

Innovation: Ongoing improvement of programs and services.

- CORE program: As you are aware, we have been working over the course of this school year to develop a program to be utilized as an alternative placement for

students from your districts. We have commitment from two of our member districts and will launch this program for student enrollment on February 18th for the 2024-2025 school year.

This program is focused as an alternative to expulsion. In addition to meeting that need for districts, the program can also be utilized as an alternative to suspension. If districts are interested in this option, they can refer a student utilizing the same [Google form](#), simply choosing the option: Alternative to Suspension (short-term). If a student is accessing the program as an alternative to suspension, districts will pay a weekly cost of \$755/week. Unlike the districts that have committed to the alternative to expulsion option, this option will be available to districts pending availability of spaces in the program.

Stewardship: Managing financial and human resources carefully and responsibly.

- FY26: We are continuing to prepare to develop the budget for the 2025-2026 school year. While many things don't begin in earnest until the end of February, we are considering enrollments, staffing needs, and distribution of responsibilities.

Communication: Multi-dimensional, transparent conversation focused on sharing information and creating a positive learning and working environment.

- Directory Advisory Update: Monthly an update is sent to member district directors. It generally contains information shared in our monthly District Update as well as information and reminders for our monthly director advisory meeting. You will find the update for January [here](#).

Integrity: Aligning our actions with our values and beliefs.

- Core Values: The secondary core values student committee has been meeting weekly with Adam, our construction trades teacher. The focus of the group has been building community and finding ways to help other students in their classes experience success. The core value student committee has found success building communities across our buildings and in all of our classrooms. The next steps will be to welcome the new students for the third quarter.

Personalization: Building on the strengths and addressing the unique needs of individual students.

- Personalization: Four school psychologists from Intermediate School District 917 attended the annual conference of the Minnesota School Psychology Association in Bloomington, MN last week. They gained new knowledge, skills, and resources in various areas of their practice including: special education law, curricular options to support tier 1 social/emotional learning in classrooms, best practices in school-based interventions for students

experiencing anxiety, and the latest research in implementation science. Additionally, another our school psychology intern will be presenting her graduate research at the National Association of School Psychology's annual convention in Seattle next month. She will travel with professors and cohort members from her graduate program as part of a university-sponsored trip.

Equity: Intentionally providing opportunities while removing barriers at all levels of the organization.

- READ Act: Special education teachers across the district participated in their second synchronous session of OL&LA training on January 27th as a requirement of the READ Act. They have one additional training that will occur this spring to conclude training.

Diversity: Appreciating and valuing everyone's unique selves.

- Lori Bohnert retires: Miss Lori has been the heart and soul of the ISD 917 Deaf/Hard of Hearing Resource Program for 18 remarkable years. Her grace, humor, and ability to manage everything all at once with ease (and a perfectly timed pun) have left an unforgettable impact on students and staff alike.

Whether navigating last-minute challenges, coordinating seamless building transitions during a pandemic, or offering encouragement when it was needed most, Lori's compassion and steady presence have been the glue that held the program together. Her wit and warmth brought joy to every interaction, and her commitment to excellence ensured every detail was handled with care. She never missed a typo...

As she moves into retirement, her legacy of kindness, laughter, and dedication will continue to inspire those she's worked with. The ISD 917 community wishes Miss Lori all the best in her next chapter, filled with adventures, family time, and well-deserved joy!