

## SEPTEMBER 2025 - FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE:

New teacher orientation and back to school workshop week went well for our office. Barb, our Onboarding Specialist, has started a new procedure of meeting with our new staff prior to their start date to go over required paperwork and benefits. By doing this, folks are able to take their time before their start date to think about what fits their family the best and leaves workshop days open to focus on education and the kids. Barb's summer was also spent working with the Minnesota Unemployment office verifying all the support staff that chose to file for summer unemployment.

Bonnie, our MARSS/Food Service person has been focused on all of the Direct Certification students and making sure their information is uploaded properly into the system. In addition, she has been working on hand entering all of the free and reduced forms that families have turned in. Once this information is uploaded, each family receives a personalized letter informing them of their status for the upcoming school year. As of writing this, LPGE has taken in 340+ free and reduced paper applications and approximately 441 Direct Certified students since July 2025.

Cindy has been diligently preparing the back to school payroll for the month of September when all of our teachers and support staff are back in the building. This time of year is spent adding any new staff and making sure their salaries and benefits are correct, adding any support staff and making sure their hours and pay rates are correct, and making any changes to benefits as folks return and have found out they need to change withholdings, etc.

Jenny has been utilizing her time helping Bonnie entering all the Food Service data to make sure the families' information is on the system as quickly as possible, while also assisting Cindy on payroll items such as time off and benefits. Along with this, she is taking care of our teachers and their ordering of materials needed for the upcoming school year, then inputting all of the invoices onto the Accounts Payable system so that I can run checks for the Board meeting.

I have been working the majority of my time on audit items and am on track to being fully prepared for the upcoming audit start date of October 6<sup>th</sup>. Each year I spend on SMART Finance is getting better and better as I'm learning the nuances of the system. Having been on Skyward for 30 years, I've found it's taking some getting used to. Luckily I have a team that is willing to dig into UFARS and specific account coding, to make sure we have everything as accurate as possible. I have also been working with our auditors ahead of our audit start date to clean up any items that I have a question on so that hopefully once they start, the audit can go smoothly and quickly.

Speaking of Skyward, since we have transitioned to SMART Finance, we will need to spend this next school year making sure we have all the required permanent documentation off the Skyward server and saved to the Cloud. Minnesota statute requires school districts to save certain payroll, general ledger and other information permanently. If you ever want to see our required retention schedule for all of our information, stop in our office and we'd be happy to show you our binder.

As always, please call or stop in if you have any questions for me or any of the other folks in the District Office. We enjoy your visits.

*Sherri Evenson*