



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, PK - Elementary Principal

Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community of Learners

Belief Statements (internal operations- beliefs to drive decisions):

- **LIFELONG LEARNERS:** We believe in the value of education for all ages.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** We believe we are accountable for our actions and outcomes.
- **COMMUNITY CENTERED:** We believe our schools are the central hub of our community and essential for building strong communities.
- **ADAPTABLE:** We believe in being responsive to an ever-changing world.
- **RESPECTFUL:** We believe in everyone’s right to safety, respect, and dignity in our schools.
- **DIVERSE:** We believe in fostering the value of each other’s individual differences, perspectives, and life experiences.
- **STUDENT FOCUSED:** We believe that we are all responsible for the success of students.

Goals

1. **STUDENT SUCCESS:** Provide all students with the education they need for success: academically, emotionally, and socially.
2. **EFFECTIVE STAFFING:** Hire, maintain, train and support staff to be as effective as possible.
3. **FINANCE:** Be financially healthy and sustainable.
4. **FACILITIES:** Have facilities that are safe, modern and conducive to 21st century education.
5. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Engage with parents, community members and business owners.

Superintendent’s Report to the School Board

Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman

May 13, 2024

Meeting Agenda Items Notes

School Forest Parcels There is currently no easement to the 40 acre parcel. Winona County Recorder Bob Bambenek has been extremely helpful in this research – his office went back to records from 1866. Two separate realtors have confirmed that the land would be significantly less valuable without an easement. Winona County owns land adjacent to the parcel and it may be the ‘simplest’ way to get an easement from them. Bob Bambenek has agreed to come to the meeting to share information and answer any questions. A letter from him on May 2nd is attached.

2024-2025 General Fund Budget Julie is not able to attend the May 13th meeting. I think it would be extremely helpful to have a Board Budget Working Session May 21st or May 28th when Julie can attend and have more time for more in-depth discussion about the budget and options for making a balanced budget. This working session should also include discussion about the Support Staff and Bus/Van Driver Handbooks with each one’s potential wages for 2024-2025.

Current FY25 Budget Estimates (May 7)

Proposed Expenditure Reductions = \$542,657

Additions in Expenses = \$293,808 (Primarily increases in Salaries/Benefits)

Proposed Revenue additions = \$83,000

Reductions in Revenue = \$302,332 (*More State SPED revenue, declining enrollment revenue decrease, increased ADM funding, Less Federal \$'s (ESSER/COVID)*)

Net reductions in expenses = \$248,849

Net reduction in revenues = \$219,332

FY25 Total Expenses = \$8,583,252

FY25 Total Revenues = \$8,342,229

Total additional adjustments needed to balance the budget = \$241,023

Solar Panel Project Attached is a potential purchase agreement with Solar Connections, Inc. Solar Connections needs Board approval to pursue the State and Federal grant funding. Julie and I met with Brok Johnson so Julie fully understands the potential projects, the financing and the projected energy savings. We have proposed financing options from Minnwest Bank and People's State Bank (attached). We had initial proposals for two year financing, but after further discussion with Julie and Brok, it is probably best to pursue a 5 year financing for the entire projects and we would make principal payments upon receipt of the grant payments. Both banks have agreed their initial 2 year interest rate proposal would still be honored with 5 year financing plan with the grant reimbursement payments. If we pursue a project at the elementary and/or high school, energy savings would begin immediately upon hook up, and if we finance the project the estimated 5 year loan payments would be offset by the energy savings. After the loan is paid in full, we would see annual energy savings of approximately \$45,000.

High School:

Total Project Cost: \$428,260

Solar for Schools Grant: \$214,130 (State Grant- 50%)

30% Elective Pay: \$128,478 (Federal Grant – 30%)

District Cost: \$85,652 (20%)

Elementary School:

Total Project Cost: \$389,367

Solar for Schools Grant: \$194,683.50 (State Grant- 50%)

30% Elective Pay: \$116,810 (Federal Grant – 30%)

District Cost: \$77,874 (20%)

Updated Safe Learning Plan We are still required to have a Safe Learning Plan related to our COVID-19 protocols. This plan needs to be reviewed every 6 months. The proposed plan eliminates the need for a 5 day absence from school. The 24 hour fever free requirement is consistent with our standard health policies for any fever.

Long Range Planning The Task Force will meet on May 20th. At the Board meeting we can discuss the community meetings in Altura and Lewiston and related items.

OTHER ITEMS

Reminder: The Lewiston Chamber of Commerce will be meeting on Wednesday, May 15th at noon at the Rec Café. These are opportunities to interact with Lewiston business owners.

End of the School Year It is a very busy month with so many end of year events and spring sports. Thank you to Dave, Cory, Ryan, the Dashir team, the office staff, teachers and coaches for making it all happen! It is great to see so much excitement and parent/community support in our schools.



On May 8th, MDE Deputy Commissioner Stephanie Graff visited our district as part of a tour of schools she was doing. Cory, Sarah and Gwen shared information about the L-A district, our strengths, challenges and how MDE supports us or potentially could do more/do things better. Deputy Commissioner Graff listened, shared her insights and acknowledged that our challenges are not unique to our district and her hopes for working with the MN Legislature to provide public school districts more support.

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.

