



# PIPESTONE AREA SCHOOLS

District No. 2689

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## School Board Report May 12, 2026

The May board meeting always comes quickly. Despite the short time, there are a few items to highlight since the regular April board meeting.

Here are a few items of interest to share with the board.

- 1. Legislation** – At the time of writing this report, the legislative session is drawing to a close. There are a number of unresolved items that may be resolved by the time we have the board meeting. Some of the more significant items include the constitutional amendment for the school lands trust, school safety and security measures, discussions about compensatory funding, and ongoing items connected to the READ Act. I will hopefully have more details on any action at the meeting on Monday.
- 2. Federal Title Funding** – We were notified recently the district would be losing nearly 14% of our Title IA funds from Fiscal Year 2026 to Fiscal Year 2027. As a result of this funding change, we are going to make staffing adjustments in the Title program accordingly. There are a few factors that well beyond our control that have led to our approximately 14% decline in Title IA funds from final FY26 to preliminary FY27:
  - First, the total amount of money granted to Minnesota to be distributed to districts is down 7.1% from SFY26 to SFY27. While the nationwide total allocations to states was flat, other states received a larger portion of the overall funds, thus reducing the share of Title funding Minnesota receives. According to the MDE, this is due to Minnesota's decrease in number of youths in poverty and increases in poverty levels in other states.
  - Additionally, within the state, the Title IA allocations are based on counts and percent of "formula" children within the geographic boundary of your district. These numbers are provided to the State by the US Department of Education and come from the census data. While Title IA is program funding designated to support students from low-income families, the allocations are not based directly on free/reduce meal eligibility of our enrolled students. Additionally, the census counts utilized in this process have some lag in time from measurement to calculation to funding.
- 3. Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Group Negotiations** – I believe I shared previously that the district has been notified that the ESP group has notified the district they are prepared to begin negotiations. We will be working with the leadership of the unit to identify some dates to begin this process.

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

4. **Data Collections** – We are beginning to do some work in the area of continuous improvement. We have developed and issued a staff excellence survey. I plan to provide a high-level overview of the results at the June board meeting.
5. **Roofing Update** – We are still on track for the roofing company to begin delivering materials at the very end of May or early June. There will be a large collection of rock again this year as Blackhawk Roofing removes the rock for the roofing project to begin.
6. **Strategic Plan and Design Work** – We continue to move forward on this project. CBE Ignited is gathering additional data with a community wide survey. I anticipate we will need to bring together a small steering committee to put some metrics into the plan from the data collections and process. I have asked that we consider updating our stated mission statement and vision statement as well as establish key organizational core values that will guide our implementation work. I look forward to the final product. At this time, I anticipate a preliminary draft would be presented to the board in June and a final draft presented at the July board meeting for adoption.
7. **Music Community Recognition** – For a second year in a row, we can extend congratulations to the entire music department as well as the Pipestone Area School community. Our school district was once again named a Best Communities for Music Education by a top Music Educators Organization in the country. What a tremendous honor to be recognized once again as a top music community. Dr. Ploeger completed the lengthy application process earlier this year. We know this recognition is the result of dedication and commitment by the educators, the students, the parents, and the community who support music in our schools.



8. **Portrait of a Graduate (POG) Progress** – Our team of educators will meet in early June with representatives from Knowledge Works as we build rubrics for the five Portrait of a Graduate attributes we have identified for Pipestone Area School graduates. These five attributes – Collaborator, Communicator, Community Contributor, Strategic Thinker, and Performance Minded will be embedded in every classroom next year throughout the district. Each month of the school year in 2026-2027 we are planning to highlight and focus on one of the attributes. This is great work and will be impactful in the months and years to come.
9. **Staff and Personalized Learning Institute** – The Northern Cass School District will host the Personalized Learning Institute again this summer. I am hoping to have a small team attend the institute and learn from experts across the nation. Feedback from the institute was positive in 2025 and I would anticipate the same positive reaction in 2026.

10. **PACE Event** – The Pipestone Area Career Event was nothing less than amazing. The support from our community businesses as well as regional higher education institutions was incredible. We had over 60 tables fill the gymnasium and actively engage with all students grades 9-12. Additionally, we had break-out sessions where students learned about basic car care and maintenance, interview tactics, digital footprints, food and nutrition information, pets and pet care, personal care, and property renting and ownership. I provided a session on leadership skills for life. All of this work was possible through great leadership by Mrs. Ortman and her team as well as the support of Erica Volkir and Tom Steffes from the Chamber as well as Justin Schroyer from the Economic Development Authority. What started as a vision to build awareness and engagement turned into a truly remarkable event. We have already started planning for next year and look forward to making this an annual event for our students and community.



11. **Teacher Appreciation** – We had a great week for Teacher Appreciation. There were so many ways our staff were celebrated and recognized. We continue to embrace a collaborative culture in Pipestone Area Schools and Teacher Appreciation Week is a great way to highlight our commitment to our collaborative culture. We conducted our annual grill out and had different businesses and individuals donate. It was a great week and I enjoyed firing up the grill for our team. We are blessed with great staff at PAS! #ProudArrows



