Work Session

Monday, September 14, 2026 5:30 PM
Faribault Public Schools District Office, 710 17th Street SW, Faribault, MN 55021

I.	**Call to Order**	
I.A.	Determination of a Quorum Present	
I.B.	Pledge of Allegiance	
II.	**Approval of the Agenda - *ACTION***	
III.	**Informational Items**	
III.A.	First Days of School - ***REPORT***	**Presenter:** Jamie Bente, Superintendent
III.B.	Academic Honors Recognition for Graduating Seniors - ***DISCUSSION***	**Presenter:** Jamie Bente, Superintendent, and Nate Molitor, Principal
IV.	**Move to a closed session, as permitted by Minn. Stat. 13D.03, for negotiation strategies with Local 70 - *ACTION***	**Presenter:** Nicole Yochum, Human Resources Director
V.	**Move to a closed session, as permitted by the attorney-client privilege (Minn. Stat. Section 13D.05, subdivision 3 (b)) to discuss the potential resolution of a threatened lawsuit against FPS - *ACTION***	**Presenter:** Jamie Bente, Superintendent
V.A.	Reconvene the meeting and consider approval of a Settlement Agreement concerning a lawsuit threatened by FPS former employee Lindsay Scholten - ***ACTION***	**Presenter:** Jamie Bente, Superintendent
VI.	**Adjourn - *ACTION***	

Superintendent Report: First Days of School

I'm pleased to share that we are off to an excellent start to the 2026–27 school year.

During the first week of school, I had the opportunity to visit each of our school buildings and see our students and staff in action. I spent time walking through classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, and other learning spaces, and I can say each of our buildings is off to an amazing start. There was a great deal of positive energy, and it was wonderful to see students excited to be back and staff fully engaged in getting the year underway.

A few highlights from the opening days include the successful distribution of school supplies to students, helping ensure that all of our students had what they needed to begin the year ready to learn. We have also heard positive feedback regarding some of the changes and new options within our school meal program, which has been great to hear.

Most importantly, our schools once again feel like schools. They are filled with students learning, reconnecting with friends, meeting their teachers, and settling into new routines. Whether it was our youngest students experiencing school for the first time or our returning students beginning another year, there was a tremendous amount of excitement throughout Faribault Public Schools.

I also want to recognize our staff. A successful first week does not happen by accident. It takes a tremendous amount of preparation from our teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, food service staff, transportation staff, custodians, office staff, technology staff, and everyone else across the district. I appreciate all of the work that went into making sure our students had a positive start.

Overall, I could not be more pleased with what I saw during that first week. Each building is off to a strong start, and I am excited to see where we go from here as we continue working together to make this a great school year for our students, staff, and families.



WE ARE FARIBAULT

Valedictorian Discussion

Breaking down why this procedure was changed, how it was implemented, and what this will look like in the future.

Why was the Valedictorian/Salutatorian title removed?

THE GOAL

To establish a culture that emphasizes student growth, achievement, and belonging rather than competition for two individual positions.

1. Reduce Academic Stress

•Class ranks can be extremely close, sometimes differing by only a fraction of a point, creating a highly competitive environment.

•This competition directly contributes to academic stress and student anxiety.

•Ultimately it can lead to academic burnout.

2. Less Academic Flexibility

•Students often limit themselves to very specific classes to maintain or improve their class rank.

•This discourages students from exploring diverse classes that genuinely interest them or align with their future career paths.

Why was the Valedictorian title removed? (Continued)

3. Uplifting Student Culture

• Eliminates one aspect of competition with one's peers.

• Shift from a "me vs. you" model to an "us" model.

4. Increase Student Recognition

• Transition to an altered Latin honors model:

- 3.0–3.499: Honors
- 3.5–4.0: High Honors
- 4.0+: Highest Honors

• Aligns with the Latin honors standards used by many colleges.

5. Success from Other Schools

• Other school districts have already shifted to this model with successful results.

How was this policy implemented?

- This policy went into the student handbook in July 2024.
- This policy goes into effect on July 2027.
- Every year the handbook is reviewed with students at the beginning of the year to ensure students have an understanding of school expectations, policies, and structures.

What will this look like in the future?

Old Model

- Pick valedictorian/salutatorian based off class rank.
- Both are recognized during senior awards night.
- Valedictorian speaks at graduation.

New Model

- Establish all honor, high honors, and highest honors students (latin honors model).
- Recognize all students who meet the latin honors criteria (3.0 - 4.0+).
- Application process for senior speaker at graduation.

This decision (just like all decisions) was made with what we believe is best for our students, their families and our community.

Questions?