



PIPESTONE AREA SCHOOLS

District No. 2689

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Superintendent School Board Report – July 22, 2026

It is already approaching the end of July. We have worked to prepare for the start of the new school year and look forward to all the activity and buzz that will start at the school when we turn the calendar to August. As we start to close out July and look to August, here are a few items of note for the board.

1. **Roofing Project** – The bulk of the project is finished now. There is still a final punch list type items as well as sheet metal work that needs to be complete. I am enclosing the latest report from Tremco for the board and community. I appreciate the work by Blackhawk Roofing. About 30 months ago, we had to make an important decision – either move forward with the improvement projects within the building and add a turf field or replace and update the roof. At the conclusion of this project, I am glad we made the decision we did. We have essentially addressed a need that will last over 20 years and will protect the taxpayer investments in the facilities for years to come.
2. **Registration time** – We are asking parents to register students. This year, we are implementing an online registration process to better serve our community. If there are questions about the process or needs for support, we would ask that parents to contact the offices at the schools. The secretarial staff are prepared to help.
3. **Attendance Goal** – This year we are doubling down on our attendance focus. Since we did not meet our attendance goal with the Achievement and Integration (A and I) plan, we were required to have a specific action plan for improved attendance. The administrative team has decided to use a few different tactics. We will have attendance boards that will show class by class the attendance rates. We hope a little friendly competition will encourage attendance. Furthermore, given our need to meet attendance goals, we were able to include some attendance incentives into the A and I grant. We are looking at drawings for student prizes for perfect attendance, as well as incentives for class attendance rates. We will work through this process throughout the year and really emphasize attendance in announcements, parent meetings, and district-wide communications.
4. I have met with the principals and we will be focused on school improvement plans again this year. Last year was the first year the district has completed a school improvement plan process. I envision we will follow a similar process of embracing an academic and a non-academic goal. These goals will be aligned to our district Portrait of a Graduate.

“Inspire life-long learners. Build Character. Prepare them for their future.”

5. Portrait of a Graduate – One year ago, we released the first draft of the Portrait of a Graduate. Throughout the year last year, we focused on building some awareness and considering how we can better align the work in the district to the five attributes which are Collaborator, Communicator, Community Contributor, Strategic Thinker, and Performance Minded. Then, in June, a team of staff members worked collectively on creating rubrics and competencies related to the 5 attributes. This year we are emphasizing throughout the year of the 5 attributes. We are also planning to do more training with staff and continuing to seek site visit opportunities to learn how student-centered approaches can better engage students and support improved attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. Here is an article that helps shed light on the positive impacts of student-centered approaches. [Why Student-Centered Learning is Key to Success - Graduate Programs for Educators](#)
6. County Fair – It is that time of year again! The great Pipestone County Get Together! I am looking forward to the upcoming fair and seeing all of the work of our students beyond the classroom. Our FFA Chapter will also be involved again this year. See you at the Fair – and don't forget the burgers and cheese curds!
7. Negotiations and Pay Periods – During the negotiations session (both the teachers and the educational support professionals groups) the idea of moving to two pay periods per month was discussed. There seems to be some growing interest in moving this direction. The teacher association is going to meet in late August to discuss this. If the teacher association is agreeable to move this direction, we would look to formalize this through a formal Memorandum of Understanding with all of the bargaining groups. This might occur later in the fall/early winter for implement as early as January 1. Time will tell, but I wanted to be sure the board was aware of this ongoing conversation from the negotiations sessions.
8. Operating Referendum – There was a work session presentation earlier this year on the district operating referendum. As you may recall, the current 10-year referendum is set to expire next fiscal year. The board shared that there was an interest in presenting a replacement referendum to the voters yet this election season. Therefore, there will be discuss and potential action at this board meeting on a new referendum amount to present to the voters at the general election in November.
9. Website – The new and improved website is now active. We will continue to make improvements to the site throughout the year. The new site meets the American Disability Act access requirements that we are required to meet. The site should help improve communications and engagement with stakeholders, parents, and students.
10. School Board Elections – It is filing season for school board. The district will have three seats that are up for consideration. The seats are currently held by Daphne Likness, Brad Carson, and Mark Hiniker. The timeline to file is from July 14, 2026 until July 28, 2026 at 5 p.m.
11. Pipestone County Emergency Plan – The school district has been asked to be part of the five-year Pipestone County Hazard and Mitigation Plan. I was involved in a webinar for this and there will be some additional meetings for the plan update. As appropriate, I will share updates on the plan development in the future as part of the planning effort is to inform constituents.
12. Grant Application – We have submitted a grant for an outdoor classroom/educational space. Conceptually, we want to find ways to maximize our district campus location. We have some great opportunities with the pond, the grass areas, and a large open space. As we look to maximize the space and consider what is possible, I have asked the vocational agriculture teachers to consider some ideas and how those might be incorporated as educational opportunities into some of the course offerings in the middle school and high school.

13. Book Studies on Student Centered Learning – We will be offering book studies for staff this year. We are giving staff different options to choose a book of interest. Lisa and I are working with the University of Sioux Falls as well to offer staff a graduate credit for the book study opportunity and work.
14. Single Use Bathroom Grant – The Minnesota Department of Education provided a grant opportunity for school districts to either build or remodel single use unisex bathroom spaces. Given the bathroom by the theater has not been remodeled or updated for a number of years. Therefore, I have submitted a grant application to MDE for funding to upgrade and remodel the space. I will let the board know once I learn if we have submitted a successful grant application.

As of now, that is all I have to update. As always, if there are questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at the District Office.