



Menahga Principal's Board Report

Steph Mercil and Michelle Koch
July, 2026

Elementary School Update



Good evening, while June and July have proven to be quieter days in the building, the Menahga administration have been busy with hiring and planning for next school year, while squeezing in a few days off and a little fun too!

The elementary has hired a 4th fourth grade teacher which will keep class sizes low at about 18, thank you for your support with that. We are still looking to hire a ½ time preK teacher for teaching a morning and afternoon session of preschool.

June 22-24 Menahga administrative team attended the Leadership retreat at Breezy Point sponsored by Sourcewell. This was a great opportunity for our team to reflect on our strategic plan, plan for the coming year, as well as get Steph on board with meeting the team and catching up on all things Menahga

For this month's meeting you will see a draft for next year's elementary handbook. Minimal changes were made.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QJoWbid8Pg0dS8QZebFVDM-DWLvldJH3/edit>

During the rest of July Steph will continue to move in and get set up with all of Menahga's systems. Steph will be meeting with Sourcewell district strategy partner, Andrea Rusk, July 30th review areas where Sourcewell can provide continued support. Steph will also be sending out a Google survey in August for staff to set up a time to meet with Steph one on one and get to know each other. Beginning Aug 3rd our teams and buildings will start to get busy again. Our administrative team will be attending a law seminar on Aug 3rd. The PBIS team will be attending a workshop on Aug 11th and ESY will be in the building Aug 17-20.

Please reach out with any questions.

Steph

Important Dates:

Aug 10...Community Pork Feed (4:00)

Aug 10...6:00 PM 26-27 Annual Menahga Athletics Kick Off (Dick Beardsley)

ESY - Aug 17-20

Aug 31-Sept 2 - Back to School workshop

Back to School Open House: Sept. 2nd 5:30-7:30 pm

7th Grade Orientation Sept 2nd 7:00-7:30 pm

Sept 8 - First Day of School 2026-2027

High School Update!



As we prepare for the 2026-2027 school year, our team has been busy planning and implementing improvements that will strengthen teaching, learning, and student support across Menahga High School. I appreciate the work of our staff throughout the summer as we continue to focus on providing the best possible educational experience for our students.

Student Handbook Updates

During the summer break, we considered revisions to the 2026-2027 Student Handbook. Two significant updates include the addition of Artificial Intelligence (AI) expectations to provide clear guidance for the ethical and appropriate use of AI in academic settings, as well as updated cell phone expectations designed to reduce distractions and increase student engagement during the school day. These updates reflect our commitment to preparing students for a rapidly changing world while maintaining a focused learning environment.

[Workable Copy of Grades 7-12: 2026-2027 Student Handbook Final .docx](#)

Staffing

We continue to seek a qualified candidate for our 7-12 Intervention Teacher position. This role is critical in providing targeted academic support and interventions for students across grade levels. We remain hopeful that we will identify the right individual to join our team before the start of the school year.

Professional Development

A team of teachers, including Baileigh, Aryanna, Todd, Laura, and Jolene, will be attending AVID Summer Institute in Inver Grove Heights. This training will continue to build our capacity to implement AVID strategies that promote organization, critical thinking, collaboration, and college and career readiness for all students. We appreciate these educators investing their time to bring new ideas and best practices back to Menahga. I am also thankful for the opportunities that Sourcewell and Freshwater have given our staff for summer Staff Development.

District-Wide PBIS

August 11th, our district PBIS leadership team will be collaborating to strengthen a consistent, district-wide framework of expectations and common language for students from kindergarten through grade twelve. Establishing shared expectations across all buildings will help create a positive, predictable, and supportive learning environment for every student.

Brave Pathways Wednesday Advisory

Beginning second quarter, Menahga High School is looking to implement Brave Pathways: Building Success Every Wednesday, a 20-minute advisory period held each Wednesday following second hour.

This advisory time is designed to intentionally support students academically, socially, and in their college and career planning while strengthening relationships with staff. The weekly focus will include:

- Week 1: Academic check-in (grades, missing work, and goal setting)
- Week 2: SchoolLinks activities and college/career readiness
- Week 3: Academic check-in and student support
- Week 4: PBIS lessons, social-emotional learning, and community building

The Wednesday schedule has been adjusted to include the advisory period while maintaining all existing lunch schedules, ensuring minimal disruption to instructional time. We believe this dedicated time will provide students with additional opportunities to build academic success, strengthen connections with staff, and prepare for life beyond high school.

As we look ahead to another exciting school year, I am grateful for the continued support of our School Board, staff, students, families, and community. Together, we remain committed to creating meaningful opportunities that help every student thrive academically, socially, and personally. I look forward to welcoming our students back and beginning another great year at Menahga High School.

FYI...I will be leaving July 21, 2026 to join our students traveling to Washington DC! Stay tuned!

Menahga Principal Goals for 2026-2027 that were developed at the June Leadership retreat.

Goal 1: Focus on Climate and Culture at Menahga Public Schools

Our school will strengthen a positive, inclusive, and collaborative culture by increasing students' and staff members' sense of belonging, safety, and engagement, as measured by annual climate survey results.

- Partner with Till360 for a Back to School message and follow up sessions with staff and students.
- Administer a climate survey to staff
- Re commit to PBIS practices

Goal 2: Strengthen Literacy and Academic Achievement

Ensure all students achieve at high levels by implementing evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the Minnesota READ Act, closing racial and economic achievement gaps, and building staff capacity in differentiated instruction to support the diverse needs of learners.

- Elementary will be participation in curricular pilots, collecting data, and collaborating to determine the best choice of ELA resources for our students K-6.
- District teams will resume Professional Learning Communities with a new name, Brave Learning Teams(BLT's).

Goal 3: Expand Career Pathways and Authentic Learning Opportunities

Increase student engagement and readiness for college, career, and life by developing cross-curricular, career-connected learning experiences; expanding community and business partnerships; and providing authentic, hands-on opportunities such as senior capstone projects and internships.

Goal 4: Support the Whole Child and Invest in Staff Development

Provide comprehensive supports that meet the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students, while ensuring every student has a positive connection with a caring adult. Strengthen staff recruitment, professional development, and training—including emerging tools such as AI—to sustain a future-focused and supportive learning environment.

- *Follow up training is planned with William Grube for Nov 13th, and also plans for working with students.*
- *We are also excited to continue expanding our work with Artificial Intelligence through additional professional learning this fall. In November, we will welcome William Grube back to Menahga Public Schools for another day of AI training with our staff, building on the practical strategies and classroom applications introduced last year. In addition to staff learning, we are especially excited to offer student AI workshops on November 19. William will work with our 6th–8th grade students in the morning, followed by a session for our 9th–12th grade students. These workshops will help students better understand the responsible, ethical, and effective use of AI while preparing them with skills that are increasingly important in college, careers, and everyday life.*

Projected Enrollment K-6 for 2026–2027 school year

Grade Level	# of Teachers	Estimated # of Students in each class
PreK		
VPK		
K		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Respectfully submitted,

Steph Mercil and Michelle Koch